

A stylized map of Scotland is the background of the cover. The map is dark green and features several clusters of white house icons and individual white tree icons scattered across its landmass. The background of the entire cover is a light green color with a repeating wavy pattern.

# Temporary Accommodation In Scotland:

**Final Report**  
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**A report commissioned by Social Bite  
on behalf of the Homelessness and  
Rough Sleeping Action Group:**

Beth Watts, Mandy Littlewood,  
Janice Blenkinsopp and Fiona Jackson

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## Acronyms

ARC	Annual Return on the Charter
CAN	City Ambition Network
DHP	Discretionary Housing Payment
HA	Housing Association
HARSAG	Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
LA	Local Authority
LGBT	Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender
MAPPA	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements
PRS	Private Rented Sector
PSL	Private Sector Leasing/ed
RRTP	Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan
RSL	Registered Social Landlord
TA	Temporary Accommodation
TFF	Temporary furnished flat

## **Executive Summary**

In 2017, Scottish Government announced an intention to transform the temporary accommodation system as part of a wider agenda to end homelessness in Scotland. This study, funded by Social Bite on behalf of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group, aims to provide a detailed understanding of the nature, purpose and use of temporary accommodation across Scotland to inform ongoing policy development and implementation.

This final report, which follows on from an interim national level report published in June 2018<sup>1</sup>, draws on in depth mixed-methods case studies in six diverse local authority areas (Dundee, East Ayrshire, East Lothian, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Perth and Kinross). The case studies involved local data analysis, interviews with 43 local stakeholders in the statutory and voluntary sectors, and interviews and focus groups with 52 people with current or recent experience of living in temporary accommodation. Key points to emerge from the analysis are as follows.

### **Temporary accommodation profiles**

Local authorities have highly diverse portfolios of temporary accommodation provision. The most dominant form of temporary accommodation in use at any one time was self-contained social sector accommodation in three of our case study areas (East Lothian, Glasgow and East Ayrshire), hostel accommodation in Dundee and Perth and Kinross, and Bed and Breakfast accommodation in Edinburgh.

Local authorities can be split into two broad groups on the basis of their temporary accommodation portfolio. In Dundee, East Ayrshire and Perth and Kinross, provision is dominated by two forms of provision – self-contained social sector stock and hostel accommodation. East Lothian, Glasgow and Edinburgh have more diverse portfolios, all using Bed and Breakfast accommodation and other forms of temporary accommodation (primarily in the private rented sector).

The more diverse temporary accommodation profiles found in East Lothian, Glasgow and Edinburgh are largely explained by the higher levels of pressure on temporary accommodation in these areas. The sources of this higher than average pressure in Edinburgh and East Lothian are housing market pressures and restricted access to affordable settled housing. In Glasgow there is cross-sector agreement that the pressure stems from a distinct set of ‘process’ issues, primarily within the local authority, that increase the time taken to process homelessness applications and rehouse people in settled housing.

Lower pressure areas nevertheless face a series of challenges. Dundee has a lack of temporary accommodation for families and Perth and Kinross and East Ayrshire face difficulties accommodating households in their preferred location. There is a more general difficulty across all local authorities in finding accommodation for very specific cases, such as those subject to Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements.

### **Social rented sector temporary accommodation**

Local authority owned social rented temporary accommodation offers advantages for local authorities for financial reasons and because it can be more closely managed in terms of

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<sup>1</sup> Littlewood, M., Watts, B. and Blenkinsopp, J. (2018) *Temporary accommodation in Scotland: Interim Report*. Edinburgh: Social Bite.

access and void/turnover management. For these reasons, the lower pressure case studies do not use housing association stock for temporary accommodation. Higher pressure areas use a mix of local authority and housing association social sector stock, except for Glasgow who as a stock transfer authority is entirely reliant on housing association accommodation.

Social rented sector temporary accommodation can be heavily concentrated in particular areas and blocks, which can limit choices, isolate people from social networks and pose issues in terms of housing management and anti-social behaviour. Some areas use 'flipping' of temporary accommodation into settled tenancies to address some of these issues and allow people to stay where they have become settled, but this is not regular practice in most local authorities.

Single people are systematically under-represented in social sector temporary accommodation in all areas and particularly in the cities. This reflects demand pressures, the prioritisation of families and the availability of alternative forms of temporary accommodation for single people. In some areas it also reflects embedded views on the appropriateness of ordinary social sector housing for those with complex needs and/or behavioural problems.

Local authorities, particularly in higher pressure areas, face a dilemma bringing more social sector accommodation in to the temporary accommodation system as this reduces the settled housing stock available for settled rehousing. Some areas (East Ayrshire and on a smaller scale Edinburgh) have recently increased their portfolio of social rented temporary accommodation, while Perth and Kinross have reduced theirs as part of a wider strategic shift towards rapid rehousing. Dundee has substantially reduced its stock of social sector temporary accommodation due to void levels but now struggle to appropriately accommodate families.

The availability of support for those in dispersed, social rented temporary accommodation varies, and is delivered in different ways, sometimes in-house by the local authority and sometimes by external support services. Views on the availability of support in this form of temporary accommodation are mixed: some local stakeholders emphasise the lack of support needs among most in this accommodation; others note improvements to and the 'flexibilisation' of floating support to those in dispersed temporary accommodation in recent years; others report residents being 'abandoned' and having insufficient access to support.

## **Hostels**

Hostels are congregate forms of accommodation provided within a building, but beyond this broad definition the range of sizes, types, facilities and levels of support can vary significantly between and within local authorities. Most local authorities have a mixed portfolio of local authority and voluntary sector hostel provision.

Dundee has more larger hostels and employs a three-tier 'staircase' system of provision including a short-term assessment centre with little support, 'direct access' hostels with low to medium support, and a structured programme of support in 'resettlement' provision. Edinburgh and Glasgow have a wider mix of provision including larger, generic hostels and smaller, more specialist units.

Hostels vary in whether they cater meals or not, and whether/what level of service charge residents must pay. Service charges can be used to evidence budgeting skills if references for rehousing are required, but can also lead to arrears and associated anxiety.

Levels of support vary significantly from hostel to hostel, from emergency assessment provision with only a light touch concierge presence and generic provision with relatively

low support, to resettlement units with structured support programmes and specialist units supporting people with addictions or other high and complex support needs.

There is a strong consensus about the challenges posed by much hostel provision, including mismatches between the support available and residents' needs and the multiple challenges associated with congregate accommodation, including conflict and anti-social behaviour, substance misuse, institutionalisation, refusals, exclusions, and under-occupancy/high voids. While some of these issues are amenable to improvement via reforms to commissioning processes and hostel design and management, many are intrinsic to the congregate hostel environment and thus hard to fully overcome.

At worst, hostels function as 'negatively enabling' environments, fuelling addiction and exacerbating vulnerabilities. Despite these issues, local informants often felt that smaller, more specialist and higher quality hostels have a place in temporary accommodation provision.

### **Bed and breakfast accommodation**

B&B accommodation is used very differently across the six case studies, with more used in Edinburgh, East Lothian and Glasgow, the areas where pressures on temporary accommodation are highest. Perth and Kinross use B&B accommodation rarely and for very short periods, and Dundee and East Ayrshire do not use it at all. The vast majority of those who reside in Bed and Breakfasts are single people, but families with children accounted for over 200 households leaving temporary accommodation during 2017-2018, with well over half of these in Edinburgh.

Core concerns about Bed and Breakfast accommodation relate to: management and suitability challenges due to its congregate nature; insufficient support being available for residents; and some Bed and Breakfasts being in poor physical condition. The highest Bed and Breakfast using local authority (Edinburgh) contests that concerns about the physical condition of B&Bs in the city are overstated, not least given substantial continuing efforts to monitor and raise standards. They see the main issue as the unsuitability of Bed and Breakfast accommodation for people to stay in for anything but a very short period.

Despite seeing Bed and Breakfast accommodation as a 'last resort' form of temporary accommodation, local stakeholders argue that it plays a necessary and important role where no other accommodation is immediately available, to keep people off the streets and ensure families can stay together. It is also seen as suiting homeless households in specific and admittedly infrequent cases and can allow local authorities time to find homeless households more suitable longer term temporary accommodation.

In Edinburgh, steps have been taken to closely monitor quality in Bed and Breakfasts, and offer more suitable 'shared housing', though some local stakeholders felt that these moves fall short of addressing the underlying systemic crisis in social housing supply. In Dundee, the rigid commitment to not use Bed and Breakfasts means that families sometimes cannot be adequately accommodated, having to move to very overcrowded accommodation or be split between different 'care of' addresses with family or friends.

### **Support**

Evidence-based practice would suggest that support and accommodation for homeless households should be provided separately, enabling flexible support 'stick with' those who need it regardless of where they are staying. The transition to separated support/accommodation is far from complete in Scotland, with most support available to those residing in hostels, mixed levels to those in dispersed temporary accommodation and



low levels to those in Bed and Breakfasts. There have been recent efforts to improve support provision in Bed and Breakfasts, particularly in Edinburgh.

Estimates provided by local authorities suggest a mismatch between the level of support in current temporary accommodation provision and the levels of need among those in temporary accommodation. Some local authorities have more medium or high support provision than their temporary accommodation resident population requires, while others do not have enough of this kind of provision. This means that many people in temporary accommodation receive too much or too little support.

## **Costs**

New local authority data on the weekly charges attached to different forms of temporary accommodation reveals the radically different methods deployed to calculate these charges, which range from £40 to £1,300 a week across all forms of provision. This differential in part reflects that some of these charges include support costs, including specialist support provision for those with complex needs, whereas others do not. But this is not likely to go far in explaining the enormous variation in weekly charges for temporary furnished flats which ranged from £65 a week in some areas to over £400 in others.

Very low charges in social sector temporary accommodation are achieved in some areas by using the General Fund to finance the temporary accommodation service, but this is clearly not mainstream practice across local authorities, meaning that residents face a stark postcode lottery in their ability to access temporary accommodation that is affordable, particularly for those in or seeking work.

Localised and discretionary attempts to mitigate disincentive effects associated with high weekly charges do little to address the systemic issues at play here that exact a sometimes extraordinarily high price in terms of temporary accommodation residents' wellbeing and future prospects.

## **Prevention**

Minimising the need for temporary accommodation via prevention work was squarely on local authorities' agendas, but the balance and kinds of prevention work undertaken in case study authorities varies. According to available data, in most areas, general housing and tenancy rights advice and informing households of their rights under homelessness legislation dominate prevention activity. Other more substantive preventative interventions (financial advice and assistance, help to move property, negotiations with landlords) accounted for around a tenth of prevention actions in Edinburgh and Dundee, a fifth in Perth and Kinross and a quarter in Glasgow. East Ayrshire and East Lothian report very low rates of prevention activity, but a higher proportion of it involves the more substantive interventions.

Across our case study areas, most local informants saw substantial scope for improved preventative interventions. A key area where gains can be made is in taking preventative efforts further 'upstream' from traditional prevention work, something requiring enhanced partnership working with a range of public and third sector agencies, including schools, housing associations, social work, addiction services and child protection agencies. Prevention work can also be enhanced via more intensive work to prevent evictions from the private rented sector and in working with households to improve their employment prospects and maximize their income. Reforms to the private rented sector in Scotland are seen to increase scope to use this tenure to prevent homelessness (as well as to rehousing homeless households), and a small role may also be played by facilitating access to mid-

market rent properties where households can afford it. Perth and Kinross have introduced a small personalised budget fund that frontline staff can access immediately to address homelessness risk creatively.

The tightening of Scottish Welfare Fund grant decisions was identified as a threat to prevention work (as well as tenancy sustainment rates). This issue was particularly acute in East Lothian where the full service roll-out of Universal Credit has already been occurred, with pressures also on Discretionary Housing Payment budgets. These issues are likely to emerge in other areas as Universal Credit is rolled out. Wider welfare reforms also threaten effective homelessness prevention, not least in increasing the ending of private rented sector tenancies as a cause of homelessness in some areas, and reducing the willingness of landlords to accommodate those on benefits.

Local authorities face trade offs in allocating further resources to prevention work, especially where caseloads for assisting already homeless households are high.

### **Length of stay**

Length of stay is strongly associated with pressure on the temporary accommodation system. Average durations in temporary accommodation vary from two and a half to four months in lower pressure local authorities (East Ayrshire, Perth and Kinross and Dundee) to six to twelve months in higher pressures areas (Glasgow, Edinburgh and East Lothian).

In most areas and across Scotland, families with children have longer stays in temporary accommodation than single people. In East Lothian, single households wait longest due to the lack of smaller properties.

Longer stays are more typical in ordinary housing association properties and Private Sector Leased properties (218 days) followed by ordinary local authority properties (147 days). Hostel stays tend to be much shorter at around 60-70 days, although this varies a lot by area and whether hostels are run by local authorities or third sector providers. Bed and Breakfast stays are 36 days on average nationally but range from 24 days in Glasgow to 70 days in East Lothian. Recommendation to limit Bed and Breakfast stays to seven days for all household types would be very challenging in these areas.

The very long lengths of stay seen in East Lothian (336 days on average) are due to the very local housing market, specifically high demand for and low turnover within social housing, a relatively small, expensive and high demand private rented sector, and also the low level of local authority rents which mean those in temporary accommodation are often willing to consider other housing options. East Lothian are also the highest user of social sector temporary accommodation in which stays tend to be longer. In Edinburgh, somewhat shorter lengths of stay (237 days on average) reflect greater use of Bed and Breakfast and hostel accommodation and a reportedly very strong focus on moving people on from temporary accommodation. Longer lengths of stay in Glasgow reflect blockages in the system, including: insufficient generation of Section 5 referrals; comprehensive and sometimes unnecessary support needs assessments; a heavy emphasis on 'tenancy readiness'; and emphasis on crisis responses – getting people into temporary accommodation rather than move them through it.

### **Rehousing outcomes**

Rehousing outcomes are also strongly related to pressure within the temporary accommodation system. Settled rehousing outcomes are highest (74-83%) where temporary accommodation pressure is lowest (Perth and Kinross, East Ayrshire and Dundee), and we also see lower levels of lost contact or unknown outcomes in these areas

(7-14%). Relevant in Perth and Kinross is the integration of allocations and homelessness teams within the local authority, close working with local housing associations and above average allocations of social housing to homeless households (49% compared to 34% nationally). Dundee and East Ayrshire benefit from lower demand for social housing, as well as modest access to privately rented accommodation as a settled rehousing outcome.

In the higher pressure case study areas, settled rehousing outcomes are lower (54-69%) and lost contacts much higher (20-23%). Despite having very high temporary accommodation pressure, Edinburgh secured settled outcomes for 69% of households, reflecting high social housing allocations to homeless households (52%). Access to the private rented sector (the outcome for 18% of households) and the Common Housing Register (EdIndex) play an important role with Section 5 referrals not used by the local authority and housing associations nevertheless allocating a far higher than average proportion of their homes to homeless households (34% compared to 26% nationally). Some local informants felt that this figure should be higher given that 74% of local authority lets are allocated to homeless households. In East Lothian and Edinburgh then, we see social housing lets having a 'compensatory role' in the context of temporary accommodation pressure. In Glasgow, by contrast, the failure to enable homeless households to access social lets fuels the pressure we see in the temporary accommodation system. The proportion of social lets allocated to homeless households is very low at just 22%. The main driver of this low figure is the local authority not generating sufficient demand via Section 5 referrals. Also relevant is the practice of some housing associations refusing referrals on the basis of rent arrears.

### **Tenancy sustainment**

Tenancy sustainment rates among statutory homeless households across Scotland were 88% in 2017-2018 compared with 89% for all households, suggesting that there are not substantial tenancy sustainment issues for homeless applicants. The proportion sustaining their tenancy for 12 months is broadly similar across the case studies, ranging from 85% of homeless households in Glasgow to 93% in Dundee. Tenancy sustainment rates for the much smaller proportion of households accommodated in the private rented sector are not known but are important particularly in Edinburgh, Dundee and East Ayrshire where this rehousing option is more common.

Local informants had concerns about tenancy sustainment relating to increasing pressures on and delays accessing the Scottish Welfare Fund to furnish new tenancies and the continued implementation of Universal Credit. In Perth and Kinross, the early shift to a rapid rehousing response to homelessness came with challenges associated with tenancy sustainment, with some households accessing unfurnished settled accommodation extremely quickly and without the usual rehousing package in place. In response, the local authority are seeking to improve the standards of settled social housing lets from a 'lettable standard' to a 'ready to occupy' standard.

### **Resident perspectives on temporary accommodation**

The most consistently negative overall experiences of temporary accommodation were associated with **Bed and Breakfasts**. A central theme concerned restrictions to residents' autonomy via the imposition of rules (curfews, about visitors), routines (fixed mealtimes) or the lack of facilities (food storage, fridges, cooking or laundry facilities). Other major issues were the lack of support commonly available in Bed and Breakfast accommodation and the absence of a caring staffed environment. Fundamental to many people's negative experiences was the congregate nature of Bed and Breakfast accommodation and the

social environment and challenges that went alongside that, including issues relating to substance use, anti-social behaviour and conflict with other residents.

These serious shortcomings in Bed and Breakfast accommodation were very commonly but not universally reported, with some Bed and Breakfasts well equipped and managed and relatively free from the social environment issues described. Residents sometimes reported being happy with the location of Bed and Breakfasts, especially when they were near friends and family, and several participants in this research reported being genuinely happy with particular Bed and Breakfast placements that they had experienced. This included one family with children, albeit that their stay was for just one night and one single man with complex needs who far preferred Bed and Breakfasts to hostel accommodation.

The balance of positive and negative experiences was more even in the case of **hostel accommodation**. On the positive side, many participants with experience in hostels reported valuing the support available 'on tap' in some of the units they had stayed in. Particularly valued was help attending appointments, accessing other services, beginning to address mental health problems and more generally, the availability of emotional support from staff and having someone to talk to. Positive aspects of some hostel provision included where they were comfortable, clean and well appointed with appropriate facilities (kitchen and laundry facilities and wi-fi for example). Hostels designed with more self-contained accommodation (en-suite bathrooms and kitchen facilities within the room) were preferable for participants, though some reported valuing the catering offered within hostels. For a small number of participants such catering had come with significant health benefits. A small number of hostel residents reported valuing the social aspects of congregate living. In rural authorities, central location of hostels, near to amenities and services, was a positive aspect of staying there. An important aspect of hostel accommodation for some residents was security, with access to the unit 'policed' by staff and some residents finding this helpful in terms of anxiety and/or feelings of safety.

Hostel accommodation was also associated with a range of negative experiences, including substantial constraints on residents' autonomy and control over their environment reflecting explicit rules (curfews, access for visitors) and routines (mealtimes, type and amount of food) in place within hostels. Having to use shared bathroom and kitchen facilities was a key drawback for many, as was the often poor quality of the accommodation, in the form of inadequate or uncomfortable furniture, poor internet, inadequate laundry facilities and poor quality building fabric. An extremely important problem for a subset of those living in hostels was the difficulty it posed in relation to seeing their children. The congregate nature of hostels and the social challenges associated with this were a problem for many, with impacts ranging from feeling awkward or ill at ease, to feeling in danger or exposed to forms of behaviour (e.g. criminal activity and substance misuse). Some hostel residents reported negative experiences with staff. In combination, these issues could have profoundly negative impacts on individuals' mental health.

**Temporary furnished flats** were a valued form of temporary accommodation due to their relative 'normality' as a form of housing and the absence of some of the concerns associated with Bed and Breakfast and hostel accommodation. Positive aspects highlighted by residents included: liking the flat or house itself; that the accommodation had everything households needed; and that the accommodation they'd been allocated was well located in relation to friends and family, services and/or amenities. Those who had previous experience in hostel accommodation described substantial improvements in their wellbeing associated with having greater autonomy, social integration, and improved family relationships.

Negative experiences were also common within temporary furnished flats. Some households had been allocated accommodation that was profoundly unsuitable for their needs, and as a result were experiencing high levels of overcrowding, worsened health conditions and very high levels of stress at the time of interview. It was common for people in temporary furnished flats to express dissatisfaction with the location of their accommodation. An important theme for those living in this form of temporary accommodation was the length of time they had been there combined with uncertainty of when they would move on, bring about a feeling of being in limbo and lacking control over their (and their families) lives and future. Not being able to make the place their own (because of rules or a sense that there was no point) compounded these feelings. The impact on children of 'being homeless' in terms of stigma, not having adequate space, being far away from school, friends and family were a source of great distress for parents, and some households reported impacts on children's wellbeing, mental health and social networks. A whole suite of negative experiences surrounded the quality of some temporary furnished flats at the point of move on (in terms of cleanliness, decoration and bigger issues or damp or broken/damaged property) and the unresponsiveness of some local authorities' repairs services.

Many of the most significant issues associated with hostel and B&B accommodation related intrinsically to their congregate nature and the rules put in place to manage this. While some of these rules and routines may be amendable to change (and serious consideration should be given to doing so), others may be essential to the running of such blocks of accommodation to reduce risk and ensure safety, especially where hostels are larger and/or have lower staff/resident ratios. Almost all of the issues associated with negative experiences in temporary furnished flats were extrinsic to this form of temporary accommodation, relating instead to the suitability of the allocation, its condition and state of repair, and repair services, all of which could be improved via reformed management and allocations practices.

Common across all forms of temporary accommodation were negative experiences relating to a lack of control or choice over temporary accommodation allocations, dissatisfaction in relation to the length of time they had been in temporary accommodation (albeit less so in Bed and Breakfasts where stays are shorter), and work disincentive effects due to the very high weekly charges of temporary accommodation. This issue had profound effects on people's wellbeing, led to boredom and isolation from friends, locked young people out of the labour market at a time they felt they needed to be building their skills and for parents impacted their ability to be good role models for their children. Across all kinds of temporary accommodation, households reported the location of their accommodation (in relation to friends, families, services and amenities) being an important driver of their wellbeing.

### **Transforming temporary accommodation in Scotland**

Most case study local authorities are a considerable way from the 'vision' of temporary accommodation and homelessness services provided by the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group's recommendations. However, locally-led strategies and service redesigns bringing practice closer to the rapid rehousing model are underway or in the planning stages in almost all of the case studies. Aspects of Scottish Government-led reforms – particular those focused on minimising the use of and lengths of stay in temporary accommodation – appear to dovetail to some significant degree with locally felt imperatives.

Many local stakeholders voice broad support for the thrust of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group's recommendations and subsequent moves to shift to a rapid

rehousing by default approach to homelessness and temporary accommodation across Scotland. There were, however, widespread concerns about the feasibility of what were seen as incredibly ambitious reforms. Commitment of resources – in the form of funding for housing support and affordable housing supply – was seen as a key enabler of change, as was buy-in and on-going commitment from all levels of local authority staff, non-statutory partners and Scottish Government. There was doubt regarding whether current understanding and commitment among middle-management and frontline staff, and relationships with key partners, were sufficient to ensure the successful implementation of the rapid rehousing agenda.

Certain aspects of the Action Group's recommendations were controversial among some local informants. Some were critical of the strong emphasis on rapid rehousing and Housing First, defending the role of supported hostel accommodation as a space for personal reflection, transformation and care. This was particularly the case among some voluntary sector temporary accommodation providers. Statutory sector key informants tended to defend only a very residual role of congregate temporary accommodation consistent with the Action Group's recommendations. Other local informants were concerned that recommendations lacked a sufficient focus on tenancy sustainment, and the importance of ensuring households access suitable accommodation with adequate ongoing support. Another concern voiced by a subset of mainly voluntary sector local informants was that the emphasis on Housing First risked being a 'bandwagon' that couldn't live up to its billing, with some also concerned that the focus on this model risks creating a two-tier system in which rough sleepers are prioritised above others in housing need.

Proposals to introduce further legal restrictions to the use of unsuitable B&B accommodation for more than 7 days for all household types received very little support among those who participated in this study. There was more support for the introduction of enforceable standards across all forms of temporary accommodation, but recognition that this could compete with the wider transition to rapid rehousing in terms of implementation capacity and that the introduction of standards could have negative unintended consequences (including rapid disinvestment of providers) unless carefully managed.

## **Conclusion**

Scotland continues to retain its status as a world leader in the realms of homelessness policy in virtue of the uniquely strong rehousing entitlements owed to homeless households. Nevertheless, this study reveals the ways in which Scotland's temporary accommodation system is not fit for purpose. At its best, temporary accommodation offers a short term, high quality, suitable stop gap en-route to settled housing. At worst, it forces people into a negative and damaging environment for an extended period that profoundly restricts their autonomy, undermines their wellbeing and damages their future life chances.

The policy implications from this research are as follows:

1. All forms of temporary accommodation can lead to negative experiences and outcomes for homeless households and (where relevant) their children. The proposed move towards a 'rapid rehousing by default' response to homelessness now underway provides the means of minimising these negative impacts, and would help facilitate many of the policy shifts outlined below.
2. The quality and suitability of all forms of temporary accommodation vary considerably. Measures should be introduced to ensure that all forms of provision meet standards of good repair, cleanliness, adequate facilities and furnishing, and appropriate buildings management. These standards should be designed to minimise the risk of negative

unintended consequences. In particular, they should avoid leading to the rapid withdrawal of key temporary accommodation providers from the system before alternatives are in place and avoid unreasonably limiting local authorities' implementation capacity to move to a rapid rehousing response.

3. The most negative experiences are associated with temporary accommodation that is profoundly unsuitable for particular homeless households, for instance, due to health conditions, overcrowding, or because it leaves them far from their friends and family or key services (e.g. schools). Local authorities should seek to ensure that temporary accommodation allocations are suitable for specific households' needs, especially where stays will be longer-term. Scottish Government should consider monitoring the suitability of temporary accommodation allocations beyond the current focus on Bed and Breakfast use, for instance, encompassing a focus on overcrowded families in temporary furnished flats.
4. As overall the worst form of temporary accommodation, Bed and Breakfasts should only be used as a 'last resort' by local authorities. Where used, efforts should be made to ensure that residents have access to the facilities they need (food storage, cooking and laundry facilities). Local authorities and third sector partners should consider whether higher quality and more appropriate models of emergency accommodation can be introduced as an alternative to Bed and Breakfast provision where the immediate elimination of Bed and Breakfast use is not currently possible. Resident experiences of Edinburgh's upgraded 'Shared Housing' Bed and Breakfast stock should be fully examined.
5. Recommendations to restrict the use of Bed and Breakfasts to a maximum of 7 days for all household types across Scotland should be pursued with caution. They will be very hard to implement in high Bed and Breakfast using areas in the short-term given current resources, and risk being disproportionate given the often comparable harms homeless households must negotiate in some hostel accommodation. Smaller and higher quality Bed and Breakfasts can play a positive role in accommodating households for a short period in a location that suits them, as an alternative to hostel accommodation for those that prefer it, and as an emergency option that enables the local authority to secure more appropriate dispersed temporary accommodation, rather than making profoundly unsuitable immediate allocations.
6. The rules and routines in place within hostel and B&B provision should be reviewed by providers and commissioners with a view to maximising the wellbeing and autonomy of residents. Where such rules are not necessary for the safe running of the unit, they should be removed.
7. Where temporary accommodation provided in the social rented sector is suitable for those living in it, 'flipping' to a mainstream social tenancy is highly desirable. The policy, culture and resource implications of mainstreaming such practice should be addressed by local authorities and Scottish Government.
8. Scottish Government and local authorities should address the systematic disadvantage currently faced by single people in accessing temporary furnished flats as opposed to other forms of temporary accommodation, while recognising the importance of prioritising families' access to dispersed provision. Such temporary accommodation,

with attached appropriate support, should also be considered appropriate for homeless people with multiple and complex needs.

9. Local practice deploying judgements of 'tenancy readiness' in deciding when homeless people are allocated settled housing should end. Scottish Government should review the non-permanent accommodation regulations that legally codify and legitimate the role of such judgements and are in stark tension with the rapid rehousing model, Housing First and international evidence.
10. The provision of support and accommodation to those experiencing homelessness should be 'de-linked' so that the support households need moves with them between accommodation (rather than being tied to residence in a particular place) and is personalised and flexible as people's needs change. Local authorities should seek – and be supported – to align their temporary accommodation provision to the profile of those needing it in their area and monitor this alignment on an ongoing basis, to ensure that households are not missing out on the support they need or forced to receive (and pay for) support they do not require.
11. The chronic work disincentive effects associated with high weekly charges for temporary accommodation should be systematically addressed to ensure that being temporarily accommodated doesn't lock people out of employment. The current postcode lottery in the weekly charges residents face should be addressed by clear guidance and through a reformed funding regime from Scottish Government.
12. Local authorities and Scottish Government should ensure that the move towards rapid rehousing responses to homelessness goes alongside a focus on the suitability of settled rehousing options and support for households to sustain their settled housing. Ensuring the availability of, and timely access to, the Scottish Welfare Fund is one key means of achieving this. The anticipated strain on the Scottish Welfare Fund and Discretionary Housing Payments with the continued roll-out of Universal Credit should be addressed by Scottish Government to mitigate potential impacts on homelessness and temporary accommodation.
13. Local authorities should expand homelessness prevention activity to include a greater focus on proactive and substantive interventions extending beyond general housing and tenancy rights advice and informing households of their entitlements under the homelessness legislation, including financial advice and assistance, help to move property (e.g. into the private rented sector or mid-market rent where affordable and accessible), and negotiations with private and social landlords. There should also be greater focus on early and upstream intervention before households are in crisis and in partnership with the range of relevant public and third sector agencies, including schools, housing associations, social work, addiction services and child protection agencies, and private landlords.
14. Scottish Government should be cognisant of widespread concerns about the feasibility of current recommendations to transform temporary accommodation and responses to homelessness in Scotland. Key areas requiring attention are: assurances of an adequate supply of affordable housing to facilitate the rapid rehousing model; the availability of resources to fund support for people in and after they leave TA to ensure sustainable outcomes; and the need for buy-in across all levels of local authority staff and among relevant third sector and public sector agencies. Plans for legislative change



to provide the tools necessary for effective partnership working are lent support by the results of this study.

15. There is currently controversy in some quarters about the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group's recommendations, with some local informants rejecting particular elements, in particular the emphasis on Housing First and rapid rehousing, and associated critiques of hostels. These views were particularly common in high hostel using areas and among providers of this form of accommodation. Key stakeholders in the homelessness sector should seek to strengthen the consensus around these recommendations to facilitate their implementation.

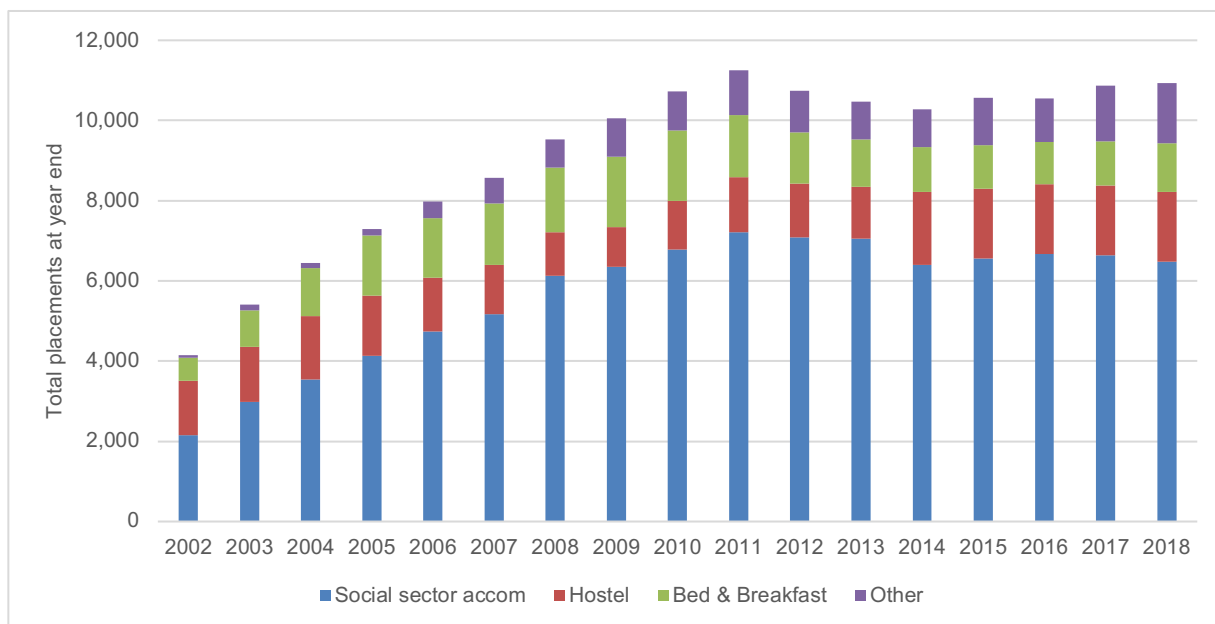
# 1. Introduction

## Background to the study

Under Scottish homelessness legislation, local authorities have a duty to offer specific forms of assistance to those at risk of or experiencing homelessness, including advice and assistance, temporary accommodation and settled or 'permanent' rehousing. Temporary accommodation (TA) refers to any accommodation secured between the point that an individual makes a homelessness application to a local authority and the point at which the local authority discharges their duty to that applicant. This covers accommodation offered to applicants: while a decision on their application is being reached; awaiting settled accommodation to discharge the local authority's rehousing duty to them; who are being referred to another authority under local connection rules while that referral outcome is being decided; and who are intentionally homeless and being accommodated for a period to give them a 'reasonable opportunity' to find their own accommodation.

The number of households residing in such accommodation has been at an historic high in Scotland since reforms radically strengthening homeless households' entitlements during the 2000s. In March 2018, just under 11,000 households were staying in TA in Scotland, almost three times the number in the early 2000s (see figure 1). A significant minority of those in TA are in Bed and Breakfast (B&B) or hostel accommodation, rather than self-contained 'ordinary' housing. Newly available data collected about households as they move into and out of TA (HL3) suggests that during 2017-2018 approximately 20,320 households entered TA and 20,450 households exited TA.

*Figure 1: Homeless households in TA – snapshot total at financial year end March 2018*



Source: Homelessness in Scotland: Annual Publication 2017-18

Recognising these trends, in 2017, Scottish Government announced “a clear national objective to... transform the use of temporary accommodation”<sup>2</sup>. The short-term cross-sector Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG) was convened to make recommendations to take forward this objective, as well as recommending means to end rough sleeping and homelessness in Scotland<sup>3</sup>. The Housing Minister also announced the creation of an ‘Ending Homelessness Together’ Fund of £50 million over five years to “support homelessness prevention initiatives and pilot solutions to deliver results”<sup>4</sup>.

In the context of these developments, the present study’s overarching aim is to provide a detailed understanding of the nature, purpose and use of TA across Scotland to inform future policy development and implementation. At its inception, the research was oriented around the following seven research questions:

1. How is TA currently **defined** in Scotland? How ought it to be defined? What is the relationship/overlap with definitions of supported accommodation?
2. What is the intended **purpose/function** of TA? How has this changed over time and why? What role, if any, have Housing Benefit and other aspects of funding arrangements had on how its use and purpose has evolved?
3. What **types** of TA are currently used in Scotland? Has this evolved over time? Does the profile of TA vary between local authorities (LA)? What accounts for this variation? How does this variation impact on management/homelessness challenges at a local level?
4. What is known about the **quality and appropriateness** of TA in Scotland? Does this vary between LA areas/by homeless groups?
5. What is known about the **costs** of TA, and variations in this across Scotland?
6. What is the **experience**, at individual household level, in terms of length and patterns of use of TA? Can we discern anything about impacts of TA on residents and their levels of satisfaction?
7. What should the **future** shape, nature and function of TA be in Scotland?

The study’s interim report, summarised below, provided answers to these questions based on analysis of existing administrative data and key informant interviews with sector experts. Taking into account developments since the publication of the interim report, this final report extends and deepens the analysis, drawing on detailed analysis of six local authority case studies and focusing on:

- Local patterns in relation to the kinds of TA used, associated support provision and the costs of TA (chapters 3 and 4);
- Local patterns in relation to homelessness prevention, length of stay in TA and rehousing outcomes (chapter 5);
- The experiences of people living in temporary accommodation and the impacts of TA stays on their lives (chapter 6);
- Local authority change agendas in relation to TA and responses to recent national policy developments in this area (chapter 7).

In particular, the study seeks to inform the ongoing implementation of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group’s recommendations on TA.

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<sup>2</sup> p.105 in Scottish Government (2017) *A Nation with Ambition: the Government’s Programme for Scotland 2017-2018*. Edinburgh: The Scottish Government. <https://beta.gov.scot/publications/nation-ambition-governments-programme-scotland-2017-18/>

<sup>3</sup> See <https://beta.gov.scot/groups/homelessness-and-rough-sleeping-action-group/>

<sup>4</sup> Stewart, K. (2017) ‘Homelessness: minister’s statement September 2017’, *Scottish Government Ministerial Statement*, 19<sup>th</sup> September: <https://beta.gov.scot/publications/ministerial-statement-on-homelessness-september-2017/>

The rest of this chapter provides the context for the study, first by reviewing existing evidence on people's experiences of TA and the impact of TA stays on them and their families, second, by summarising the findings of this study's first phase presented in the companion interim report, and third, by providing an overview of recent policy development in this area.

## Existing evidence on temporary accommodation experience and impacts

This section summarises existing available evidence from the UK (and where appropriate, internationally) on people's experiences of TA and its impacts on them<sup>5</sup>.

There is a fairly voluminous although now dated evidence base on the experiences of families placed in B&Bs in London<sup>6</sup>. These studies all reported the now familiar findings of inappropriately small, shared rooms; poor, shared, bathrooms and inadequate cooking facilities; alongside general disrepair, poor decorative order and poor hygiene. In England (as in Scotland) this popular image of families living in B&Bs for months or even years at a time no longer reflects the reality of most TA experience. Self-contained TA usually in mainstream accommodation known as temporary furnished flats (TFFs) are far more common<sup>7</sup>, but much less well researched<sup>8</sup>.

That said, there is evidence both in England<sup>9</sup> and Scotland<sup>10</sup> that a high proportion of statutory homeless households in some areas 'pass through' B&B at least briefly, suggesting that it is often used as an initial placement before longer-term (usually self-contained) TA is arranged. More recent evidence in Scotland confirms that for homeless households staying in B&B, particularly when this is for extended periods<sup>11</sup>, as sometimes happens with single people<sup>12</sup>, conditions remain grim. Homeless people participating in the large-scale 'Aye We Can' consultations across Scotland spoke out firmly against the use of B&Bs, wanting to see it ended altogether<sup>13</sup>. A recent survey of 74 people with experience in B&B or hotel accommodation in Scotland undertaken by Crisis<sup>14</sup> found that:

- Almost half of respondents had no access to a kitchen, a third had no access to a fridge, and going without meals was common;

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<sup>5</sup> This summary is based on Fitzpatrick, S. and Watts, B. (2018) *Temporary Accommodation: A Brief Review of the Evidence*. Unpublished paper produced for the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group.

<sup>6</sup> Bayswater Hotel Homelessness Project (1987) *Speaking for ourselves: Families in Bayswater B&B* London: Bayswater Hotel Homelessness Project; Howarth, V. (1987) *A survey of families in bed and breakfast hotels: Report to the Governors of the Thomas Coram Foundation for Children*, London: Thomas Coram Foundation for Children.; Murie, A. and Jeffers, S. (1987) *Living in Bed and Breakfast: the experience of homelessness in London* Bristol: University of Bristol, School for Advanced Urban Studies.; Crane, H. (1990) *Speaking from Experience: Working with Homeless Families* London: Bayswater Hotel Homelessness Project; Carter, M. (1995) *Out of Sight: London's Continuing B&B Crisis* London: London Homelessness Forum; Carter, M. (1997) *The Last Resort: Living in Bed and Breakfast in the 1990s* London: Shelter.; Sawtell, M. (2002) *Lives on hold: Homeless families in temporary accommodation*, London: The Maternity Alliance.; Kings Cross Homelessness Project (2002) *Report on life in bed and breakfast accommodation* London: Kings Cross Homelessness Project.

<sup>7</sup> See chapter 3 and for England: Fitzpatrick, S., Pawson, H., Bramley, G., Wilcox, S., Watts, B., & Wood, J. (2018) *The Homelessness Monitor: England 2018*. London: Crisis.

<sup>8</sup> Pleace, N., Fitzpatrick, S., Johnsen, S., Quilgars, D. & Sanderson, D. et al (2008) *Statutory Homelessness in England: the Experience of Families and 16-17 Year Olds*. London: DCLG.

<sup>9</sup> Pleace, N., Fitzpatrick, S., Johnsen, S., Quilgars, D. & Sanderson, D. et al (2008) *Statutory Homelessness in England: the Experience of Families and 16-17 Year Olds*. London: DCLG.

<sup>10</sup> Shelter Scotland (2017) *The Use of Temporary Accommodation in Scotland*. Edinburgh: Shelter Scotland.

<sup>11</sup> Shelter Scotland (2017) *The Use of Temporary Accommodation in Scotland*. Edinburgh: Shelter Scotland.

<sup>12</sup> The Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2014 does not permit this for families with children.

<sup>13</sup> Glasgow Homelessness Network (2018) *Can We Solve Homelessness in Scotland? Aye We Can*. Glasgow: GHN.

<sup>14</sup> Sanders, B. and Reid, B. (2018) *I won't last long in here': experiences of unsuitable temporary accommodation in Scotland*. London: Crisis.

- Almost half had no access to laundry facilities and almost all had to share bathroom facilities;
- Between a third and half of respondents reported experiencing: poor heating and draughts, bad smells, cramped living conditions, damp and mould, trip hazards (bald carpets/cracked tiles) and poor quality breakfasts;
- Half of respondents reported having felt unsafe during their stay;
- Six out of ten respondents were subject to a curfew, three quarters were unable to have visits from friends and family, over 80% were not allowed dogs or other pets in the accommodation and half were not able to stay away for the night;
- Respondents also commonly reported that stays in B&B/hotels worsened existing conditions, including skin problems/eczema, asthma, chest/breathing problems, and some mental health problems.

Crisis have thus called for the Unsuitable Accommodation Order (which limits family stays in unsuitable TA, notably B&B accommodation, to 7 days barring exceptional circumstances) to be extended to all household types. The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action group have also made this recommendation (see appendix 1).

'Hostels' vary enormously in their scale and quality and in the level of support that they offer<sup>15</sup>. There is ample evidence of very poor experiences and outcomes associated with large-scale, unsupported generic hostels, such as the very large local authority hostels in Glasgow that were closed down between 2003 and 2008<sup>16</sup>. However, the 'treatment-first' philosophy of supported 'transitional' hostels, too, has been criticised because of high placement failure rates<sup>17</sup> and unintended consequences (e.g. institutionalising homeless people)<sup>18</sup>. There is international evidence that homeless people often strongly dislike hostels<sup>19</sup>, and many of those who remain on the streets cite fear of hostels as the principal reason for their reluctance to accept help<sup>20</sup>. Difficulties in managing challenging behaviour also mean that some hostels, women's refuges and other forms of shared or communal provision exclude those with the most complex needs<sup>21</sup>. Recent research by McMordie confirmed that these negative dynamics define experiences of TA among chronically homeless single people in Belfast<sup>22</sup>. A review of evidence on 'what works to end rough sleeping?' published in 2017 confirmed that these UK-based findings are strongly borne out by international literature in this area<sup>23</sup>. Closer to home, homeless people participating in the 'Aye We Can' consultations across Scotland were firmly against use of hostels as well

<sup>15</sup> Littlewood, M., Watts, B. and Blenkinsopp, J. (2018) *Temporary accommodation in Scotland: Interim Report*. Edinburgh: Social Bite.

<sup>16</sup> Fitzpatrick, S., Bretherton, J., Jones, A., Pleace, N., and Quilgars, D. (2010). *The Glasgow Hostel Closure and Re-provisioning Programme: Final report on the findings of a longitudinal evaluation*. York: Centre for Housing Policy, University of York.

<sup>17</sup> Sahlin, I. (2005). The staircase of transition: Survival through failure. *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research*, 18(2), pp.115-135.

<sup>18</sup> Busch-Geertsema, V., and Sahlin, I. (2007). The role of hostels and temporary accommodation. *European Journal of Homelessness*, 1, pp.67-93. Available at: [http://feantsaresearch.org/IMG/pdf/ejh\\_vol1\\_article3.pdf](http://feantsaresearch.org/IMG/pdf/ejh_vol1_article3.pdf). Parsell, C., Fitzpatrick, S., & Busch-Geertsema, V. (2013) Common Ground in Australia: An Object Lesson in Evidence Hierarchies and Policy Transfer. *Housing Studies*, 29(1): 69-87.

<sup>19</sup> Busch-Geertsema, V., and Sahlin, I. (2007) The role of hostels and temporary accommodation. *European Journal of Homelessness*, 1: 67-93.

<sup>20</sup> Homeless Link. (2013). *Personally Speaking: a Review of Personalisation in Services for Rough Sleepers*. London: Homeless Link.

<sup>21</sup> JRF (2016) *UK Poverty: Causes, Costs and Solutions*. York; JRF. (Chapter 9)

<sup>22</sup> McMordie, L. (2018) *Chronic Homelessness and Temporary Accommodation Placement in Belfast*. Edinburgh: I-SPHERE, Heriot-Watt University.

<sup>23</sup> Mackie, P., Johnsen, S. and Wood, J. (2017) *Ending Rough Sleeping: what works?* London: Crisis. <https://www.crisis.org.uk/ending-homelessness/homelessness-knowledge-hub/services-and-interventions/ending-rough-sleeping-what-works-an-international-evidence-review/>

as B&Bs, and wanted to see it ended altogether, much preferring the Housing First approach<sup>24</sup> (which seeks to rapidly rehouse homeless individuals with complex needs into 'normal', dispersed settled accommodation with wraparound support).

However, Housing First will not work for everyone and retaining a choice of supported accommodation options is vital for the estimated 20% of homeless people with complex needs for whom it is not suitable<sup>25</sup>. For young people under 25, while there is emerging evidence of the efficacy of Housing First model too<sup>26</sup>, there are some grounds for thinking that there may remain a bigger role for shared and congregate forms of accommodation at this transitional phase in life<sup>27</sup>. However, evidence on the outcomes associated with these various models of accommodation – and even young people's experiences of living in these forms of accommodation - remains limited<sup>28</sup>.

The potentially negative consequences of some hostel-type accommodation (negative peer pressure; institutionalisation; the loss of independent living skills; and work disincentive effects)<sup>29</sup>, also means that non-institutional emergency accommodation that provides homeless people with a room in a community host's home (e.g. Nightstop) has been viewed as a particularly promising approach in the youth homelessness field<sup>30</sup>. Supported Lodgings is a longer-term option that offers young people a room in a private home with trained hosts and support from professionals for up to several years. The limited evidence currently available on Supported Lodgings is positive<sup>31</sup>. A 2008 Department for Communities and Local Government evaluation of such schemes<sup>32</sup> compared outcomes with other forms of supported accommodation (supported housing, Foyers and floating support). While noting caution given small sample sizes, the evaluation found that Supported Lodgings was associated with better outcomes on a range of work, training, education and substance misuse dimensions. Supported Lodgings placement failure rates also compared favourably to those for supported housing and foyers, although were higher than in floating support. A recent study by I-SPHERE and Shelter Scotland exploring the feasibility of Supported Lodgings playing a more prominent response to youth homelessness in Scotland found support for the model among key stakeholders, potential host households and young people with experience of homelessness<sup>33</sup>.

In shared/congregate forms of TA, as in other settings working with homeless people and other potentially vulnerable groups, there is growing evidence of the benefits of planning for Psychologically Informed Environments – called Psychologically Informed Planned

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<sup>24</sup> GHN (2018) *Can We Solve Homelessness in Scotland? Aye We Can*. Glasgow: GHN.

<sup>25</sup> JRF (2016) *UK Poverty: Causes, Costs and Solutions*. York: JRF. (Chapter 9)

<sup>26</sup> Benjaminsen, L. (2013) 'Policy review up-date: results from the Housing First based Danish Homelessness Strategy, *European Journal of Homelessness*, 7(2): 109-131.

<sup>27</sup> Gaetz, S. (2014) 'Can Housing First work for youth?', *European Journal of Homelessness*, 8(2), 159-175.

<sup>28</sup> Watts, B., Johnsen, S., & Sosenko, F. (2015). *Youth Homelessness in the UK: A Review for The OVO Foundation*. Edinburgh: Heriot-Watt University; Watts, B. and Blenkinsopp, J. (2018) *Supported Lodgings: Exploring the feasibility of long-term community hosting as a response to youth homelessness in Scotland*. Edinburgh: Shelter Scotland.

<sup>29</sup> Busch-Geertsema, V., & Sahlin, I. (2007) 'The role of hostels and temporary accommodation', *European Journal of Homelessness*, 1: 67-93; Stone, M. (2010) *Homeless not Voiceless: Learning from Young People with Experience of Homelessness in the North East*. Newcastle: Barnardo's North East; Benjaminsen, L. (2013) 'Policy review up-date: results from the Housing First based Danish Homelessness Strategy, *European Journal of Homelessness*, 7(2): 109-131.

<sup>30</sup> Watts, B., Johnsen, S., & Sosenko, F. (2015) *Youth Homelessness in the UK: A Review for the OVO Foundation*. Edinburgh: Heriot-Watt University.; see also Insley, E. (2011) *Staying safe: An Evaluation of Nightstop Services*. London: Depaul UK.

<sup>31</sup> Watts, B. and Blenkinsopp, J. (2018) *Supported Lodgings: Exploring the feasibility of long-term community hosting as a response to youth homelessness in Scotland*. Edinburgh: Shelter Scotland.

<sup>32</sup> DCLG. (2008) *Making a Difference: Supported Lodgings as a Housing Option for Young People*. London: DCLG.

<sup>33</sup> Watts, B. and Blenkinsopp, J. (2018) *Supported Lodgings: Exploring the feasibility of long-term community hosting as a response to youth homelessness in Scotland*. Edinburgh: Shelter Scotland.

Environments in criminal justice – for people with multiple needs<sup>34</sup>, which includes the provision of trauma-informed care<sup>35</sup>. This takes into account the underlying causes of complex needs and the challenging behaviours that can be associated with them.

Additionally, there is growing interest in the use of peer support, whereby people with personal experience of multiple and complex needs work with clients, either on a paid or volunteer basis, including as peer mentors. While the existing research would indicate that some caution is required with the peer mentoring approach<sup>36</sup>, there is emerging evidence that properly supported peer workers in homelessness services can add value<sup>37</sup>. Their shared histories with service users seem to help break down barriers and can provide positive role models. However, additional management costs and higher-than-usual sickness absence rates might have to be allowed for<sup>38</sup>.

A major statistical study of statutory homelessness in England published in 2008 provides some overarching and particularly useful lessons on TA experiences and impacts of potential relevance in Scotland<sup>39</sup>. Perhaps surprisingly, this study revealed that **satisfaction levels** were fairly similar across all forms of TA, but also that particular forms of TA were perceived to have distinct advantages and disadvantages by their residents. Thus self-contained TA had the best space standards, but often the worst physical conditions (especially in London); those who were 'homeless at home' with family and friends reported the best physical conditions, amenities, and felt safest, but the worst space/privacy standards; and those in hostels and B&B reported the poorest access to amenities (including kitchens/living rooms). However, and crucially, **quality of life** was significantly and consistently reported as higher in self-contained than in shared forms of TA. Moreover, both satisfaction levels and quality of life were markedly higher amongst families with children who had moved onto settled housing, even though the survey indicated mixed results on housing conditions (i.e. that these were often no better in settled housing than in TA, and in some instances were actually worse). In other words, security of tenure in and of itself – independent of physical conditions – was reported as valuable by families with children. The sense of life being 'on hold' for as long as households were in TA came across very strongly.

For young people aged 16 and 17 years old the pattern was quite different: they were only marginally more satisfied with settled housing than with TA, and did not report a higher quality of life once in settled housing. Most of these young people thought the staff helpful and the other young people good company in supported, shared forms of TA. This is further evidence that models of TA (and supported accommodation) need to cater specifically to the needs of young people at this very young end of the age spectrum.

In recent years, several Scottish Government-led reviews have reinforced some of the concerns raised in the research literature summarised here. Most recently the Local

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<sup>34</sup> Breedvelt, J.F. (2016). *Psychologically Informed Environments: A Literature Review*. London: Mental Health Foundation.; Keats, H., Maguire, N., Jonson, R., and Cockersell, P. (2012). *Psychologically Informed Services for Homeless People. A Good Practice Guide*. Southampton: University of Southampton.

<sup>35</sup> Maguire, N.J., Johnson, R., Vostanis, P., Keats, H., and Remington, R.E. (2009). *Homelessness and Complex Trauma: A Review of the Literature*. Southampton: University of Southampton.

<sup>36</sup> Public Health England. (2015). *The International Evidence on the Prevention of Drug and Alcohol Use: Summary and Examples from England*. London: Public Health England.

<sup>37</sup> Johnsen, S. (2013). *Turning Point Scotland's Housing First Project Evaluation: Final Report*. Edinburgh: Institute for Housing, Urban and Real Estate Research, Heriot-Watt University.

<sup>38</sup> Johnsen, S. (2013). *Turning Point Scotland's Housing First Project Evaluation: Final Report*. Edinburgh: Institute for Housing, Urban and Real Estate Research, Heriot-Watt University.

<sup>39</sup> Pleace, N., Fitzpatrick, S., Johnsen, S., Quilgars, D. & Sanderson, D. et al (2008) *Statutory Homelessness in England: the Experience of Families and 16-17 Year Olds*. London: DCLG.



Government and Communities Committee Report on Homelessness concluded that there was a “mixed picture”<sup>40</sup> of quality in TA across Scotland. Concerns related in particular to:

- the insecurity of TA placements and households having to move from one TA placement to another;
- vulnerable individuals being placed in environments close to those with drug and alcohol problems;
- declines in people’s wellbeing and escalations in their support needs during their time in TA;
- individuals spending long periods in TA; and
- the high costs of TA creating a work disincentive.

The Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee’s inquiry into youth homelessness prevention (2012-2014)<sup>41</sup> highlighted particular issues with young people’s experiences in TA, and especially hostel and B&B accommodation.

### Transforming temporary accommodation in Scotland

In early 2018, and on behalf of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group, Social Bite commissioned a study to explore the nature of and challenges associated with TA provision in Scotland. The interim report<sup>42</sup>, completed in time to inform the Action Group’s final recommendations (see below) involved a rapid review of relevant policy and research literature; key informant interviews with 16 stakeholders expert in homelessness and TA; and analysis of official administrative datasets (HL1-3 and the Annual Return on the Charter). The report’s key findings were as follows:

- Sector experts perceive a gap between the intended **role of TA** in Scotland and the role it actually plays. TA is meant to provide a safe and short-term place to stay while local authorities assess their legal duties to the household, and to provide support for those who need it. In practice, stays in TA are often lengthy, and households often placed in accommodation with either too much or too little support.
- The widening and strengthening of homeless households’ legal entitlements in Scotland necessitated **rapid growth in TA**, and local authorities have subsequently struggled to reduce the number of households living in such accommodation. The number of households in TA doubled between 2003 and 2010 and has subsequently stayed at **historically high levels** of well over 10,000.
- **Trends in TA use vary enormously between local authorities.** While some areas have seen sustained and substantial growth since the early 2000s, others have seen more modest growth, and others still have seen TA use stabilise or reduce since 2010.
- The most common **type of temporary accommodation used** in Scotland is self-contained social sector accommodation, accounting for around two thirds of TA placements nationally. The numbers in hostel accommodation have increased by 43% since 2010. Some areas utilise hostels to accommodate a very substantial proportion of those in TA, whereas others use this type of accommodation to a much smaller degree,

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<sup>40</sup> p. 39 in Scottish Parliament Local Government and Communities Committee (2018) *Report on Homelessness*, SP Paper 279. <http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/103620.aspx>

<sup>41</sup> Equal Opportunities Committee (2014) *Having and Keeping a Home – 2014 Follow-up* [http://www.parliament.scot/S4\\_EqualOpportunitiesCommittee/Inquiries/Having\\_and\\_Keeping\\_a\\_home\\_-\\_2014\\_follow-up\\_summary\\_paper.pdf](http://www.parliament.scot/S4_EqualOpportunitiesCommittee/Inquiries/Having_and_Keeping_a_home_-_2014_follow-up_summary_paper.pdf).

<sup>42</sup> Littlewood, M., Watts, B. and Blenkinsopp, J. (2018) *Temporary accommodation in Scotland: Interim Report*. Edinburgh: Social Bite.



and some do not rely on hostels at all. B&B usage has fallen by a third over the same time period and is not used at all in the majority of local authorities. It continues to be used heavily in a small number of areas.

- The key **drivers of local authorities' TA profile** are historical ways of working, local leadership, the local housing market context, and the nature and quality of local authorities' relationships with housing associations. In almost all areas, local authorities let a larger share of available tenancies to homeless applicants than housing associations do, often by a significant margin, and the proportion of lets to homeless households is well below average in the six stock transfer authorities.
- The **quality and appropriateness of TA** varies substantially. Self-contained TA is generally considered to be of the best quality. Significant concerns are associated with both hostel and B&B accommodation, albeit that it was acknowledged these kinds of TA vary substantially depending on the provider. Key concerns surround the social environment and rules and regulations associated with these congregate forms of accommodation, the mismatch between support needs and support provision, and the quality of buildings, with the lack of cooking and laundry facilities available in B&B seen as especially problematic. Sector experts were supportive of efforts to improve the standards of TA, albeit mindful of the varying challenges and resource requirements associated with doing so in different local authorities.
- **TA rents** are often considered to be unhelpfully high, which impacts on households' ability to continue or move into work. While some local authorities practice 'full cost recovery' meaning TA rents can be extremely high, others have TA rents at close to Local Housing Allowance or standard social rent levels. These stark variations raise concerns about equity and fairness in the TA offer across Scotland.
- The **TA funding** regime is rigid, complex and opaque with some uncertainty about how it will be funded in future. Some local authorities have started to adjust their TA portfolios to reduce the cost of TA. Such efforts may improve value for money, ease the financial burden of TA on local authority budgets and alleviate the poverty/unemployment traps that can effect TA residents, but also carry risks of leading to declining TA quality.
- Nationally, the average **length of stay in TA placements** across all accommodation and household types is around three months. The average length of TA placements varies, however, from just 1.5 to 2 months in some local authorities, to much longer periods of 6 to 12 months in others. Particular household types in some areas can spend up to 1 to 2 years in TA *on average*, meaning that some are likely to spending considerably longer than this waiting for settled housing. Sector experts see reducing the time spent in TA as a key policy ambition, while recognising the central importance of settled housing being suitable, sustainable and affordable.
- Homeless households have **radically divergent chances of achieving a 'settled accommodation' outcome** depending on the local authority they are in: the proportion of unintentionally homeless households securing such an outcome ranges from a low of just over 50% in Glasgow and Midlothian to 80% or over in Falkirk, Moray and Orkney.
- The overwhelming majority of those who secure a 'settled accommodation' outcome via the homelessness system **access homes in the social rented sector**, with less than 1 in 10 being rehoused in the private rented sector.

Based on these findings and the perspectives of key informants involved in the study, the interim report proposed a suite of priorities needed to transform the use of temporary accommodation, including:

- **national leadership** to define the purpose and standards required of TA combined with **local flexibility** to reform TA given it's highly differentiated nature across Scotland;
- a **funding regime** that offers **value for money** for the public purse, **clarity and efficiency** for those administering it, **adequate funds** to maintain TA at a **sufficient standard** and with appropriate support, and which is **affordable** to those residing in it, including those in or seeking work;
- **Reducing demand** for TA by: (1) **strengthening homelessness prevention**, including learning from reforms in England and Wales introducing prevention duties on local authorities and other partner agencies and (2) **increasing the outflow** of households from TA by facilitating access to appropriate settled housing through personalised support and planning;
- **Improving the quality and appropriateness** of TA, recognising that **self-contained furnished TA** is the most appropriate stop-gap for the majority of households, via improved **strategic procurement and planning** of TA stock and the introduction of **clear TA standards**;
- Ensuring that TA residents have **the level and nature of support required** to meet to meet their needs, no more and no less;
- **Enabling partnerships** with the full range of health, social care, education, criminal justice partners and social and private landlords required to effectively prevent homelessness, respond to the needs of those experiencing homelessness and ensure access to appropriate temporary and settled accommodation.

### The Action Group's recommendations

In May 2018 and drawing on a range of evidence sources, the Action Group published its recommendations on transforming the use of TA organised into four areas. These recommendations are summarised below, and reproduced in full in appendix 1.

#### 1. Reducing the need for temporary accommodation in the first place:

- strengthen homelessness prevention, via the introduction of a 'new prevention duty' on local authorities and robust preventative duties on other public bodies, housing associations and organisations commissioned by public bodies to deliver homelessness and associated services;
- revise legislative arrangements on local connection and intentionality that create barriers to support;
- adopt a 'no wrong door' approach to people who need homelessness assistance from any public or third sector agency;
- have pathways in place to prevent homelessness for groups known to be at highest risk;
- provide support to enable people to maintain their tenancies;
- transition to a model of 'rapid rehousing' by default via 5 year local authority Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans due by December 2018, which provide access to Housing First provision for those with complex needs, increase access to settled accommodation, and are integrated into wider local authority housing need assessment and planning processes;
- promote the widest range of move-on options, spanning local authority, housing association, private rented and alternative forms of accommodation, like community hosting and sharing models;
- increase effective move-on to the private rented sector via strengthened security of tenure, use of social lettings agencies, rent deposit bond schemes, and 'help to rent' schemes providing pre- and post- tenancy support;

- support people to choose to remain in their self-contained temporary accommodation if they wish to via ‘flipping’ temporary tenancies into secure tenancies;
- regularly review the people and households in TA to enable ongoing assessment of the suitability of accommodation and opportunities to move to settled housing.

## **2. Support for people into, while in, and beyond TA:**

- introduce ‘personal housing plans’, a tool providing personalised planning to enable people to move into settled mainstream accommodation, with whatever support they need to maintain it;
- empower frontline workers so that decisions and resource allocation are flexible and responsive, trusting relationships can be built to ensure psychologically informed approaches, and people can access the best possible housing option quickly;
- enable and encourage evidence-based support interventions, including personalised responses, assertive in-reach and intensive case management;
- widen temporary accommodation options to maximise opportunities to move-on to settled mainstream accommodation, including the development of informal supports for people in mainstream temporary accommodation with low level needs; widening crisis intervention models to include community hosting; and redesigning purpose built accommodation to ensure it prevents repeat homelessness by moving to small scale, specialist, trauma informed models which focus on specific needs.

## **3. Quality, standards and regulation of temporary accommodation:**

- introduce a legally enforceable standards framework for all types of TA following consultation with the sector;
- extend the 7-day restriction on unsuitable TA to all homeless people;
- introduce the means to enforce and monitor TA standards via the Scottish Housing Regulator, and amend Scottish Government homelessness statistics as an additional monitoring tool.

## **4. The financing of temporary accommodation:**

- the costs of homelessness and TA should be a citizen-funded service, supported by local authority General Fund finance and Scottish Government Grant Aided Expenditure;
- Scottish Government and COSLA should seek the devolution of TA funding support through housing benefit to Scotland. This devolved funding should be ring-fenced to focus on preventing homelessness;
- Scottish Government should support homelessness services via a flexible grant system, in order to tackle poverty and enable people to access employment, training or further education;
- Local authorities should set rents at levels similar to Local Housing Allowance rate to provide a more equitable system and support move-on from TA. This will require the provision of financial support to local authorities to bridge the gap while ensuring standards and support are maintained.

The majority of these recommendations were accepted in principle by the Scottish Government, with those relating to the devolution of funding for TA from the UK Government to be analysed further by Scottish Government in partnership with local

authorities<sup>43</sup>. All recommendations made by the Action Group are being taken forward by the Government convened cross-sector Homelessness Prevention and Strategy Group<sup>44</sup>.

## **Report structure**

The next chapter (chapter 2) gives an account of the research design and methods adopted for this study, including an explanation of the selection of our 6 case study local authorities. Chapter 3 describes the case study local authorities' use and management of temporary accommodation, focusing on the 'pressure' within the TA system in these areas. Chapter 4 explores the three main types of TA used in Scotland and the challenges associated with them from the local authority perspective, as well as the support provided in TA, and the weekly charges associated with different forms of TA. Chapter 5 considers approaches to minimising the use of TA in the case study authorities, specifically exploring the nature of homelessness prevention, the length of time households stay in TA in the local authorities and rehousing outcomes. Chapter 6 provides an analysis of the experiences of TA residents, highlighting their views on the positive and negative aspects of the key kinds of TA and the impacts of TA stays on their lives. Chapter 7 describes the local authority-led transformation agendas already underway in relation to TA provision and local informants' perspectives on the nationally-led policy change initiated by the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action and now being pursued via Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans. Chapter 8 elucidates the key conclusions from the study.

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<sup>43</sup> Scottish Government (2018) 'Transforming temporary accommodation', *Scottish Government news release*, 29<sup>th</sup> May: <https://news.gov.scot/news/transforming-temporary-accommodation>

<sup>44</sup> See <https://beta.gov.scot/groups/homelessness-prevention-and-strategy-group/>

## 2. Research design and methods

This second phase of the research involved mixed-methods in-depth case studies of six local authorities in Scotland. Each case study comprised (a) an examination of local statistics (b) interviews with key statutory and voluntary sector stakeholders and (c) interviews with temporary accommodation residents, described in more depth below.

### Case study selection

Local case studies were selected purposively to capture variation across Scottish local authorities in relation to a series of key indicators relevant to homelessness and temporary accommodation. The main indicators used in the segmentation analysis driving case selection were:

- Homelessness pressure (population rate of homeless applications)
- TA pressure (numbers in TA at the year-end compared with the numbers owed a duty for settled accommodation)
- Overall numbers in TA
- Length of stay in TA
- Use of hostels and/or B&Bs
- Proportion of social rented sector lets to homeless households
- Proportion of applications with outcome in settled accommodation
- Use of the private rented sector (PRS) as settled accommodation.
- Area type – whether primarily urban, rural or mixed urban/rural

In selecting local authority areas exhibiting variation in these attributes of interest, areas characterised by ‘average’ performance across key indicators were not prioritised.

Based on this approach, Dundee, East Ayrshire, East Lothian, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Perth and Kinross were selected as case study areas. A brief description of these areas’ attributes in relation to the key indicators listed above is provided in table 1. No remote rural case studies were selected, since these did not tend to show variation across a number of measures sought by our case study selection approach and tended to be characterised by low overall numbers in TA.

*Table 1: Case study selection*

Case study area	Attributes
1. Dundee	High homeless pressure, lots of TA, more use of hostels/B&B, average rehousing outcomes, city
2. East Ayrshire	Medium pressure, lower TA numbers, more use of hostels/B&B, higher settled rehousing outcomes, more use of PRS, mixed/rural
3. East Lothian	Medium to high pressure, long stays in B&B, more use of B&B, lower settled rehousing outcomes, mixed/rural
4. Edinburgh	High numbers in TA, more hostels/B&B, more use of PRS, mixed rehousing outcomes, city
5. Glasgow	High homeless pressure, lots of TA, lower settled accommodation rehousing outcomes, city
6. Perth & Kinross	Medium to low pressure, lower TA numbers, more hostel accommodation but decreasing, higher lets to homeless households, higher settled rehousing outcomes, mixed/rural

While these case studies cannot offer a representative and generalizable picture of temporary accommodation use and management or TA resident experiences across Scotland, they do offer in combination an opportunity to examine in detail some of the key

themes relevant to temporary accommodation provision, and its future transformation and improvement, across the country.

## **Data collection and analysis**

A mixed-methods approach to data collection was pursued in each case study, comprising three elements.

### ***(1) Examining local data***

The data analysed for the six case study areas in this report is based on several key national datasets: HL1, HL2 and HL3 data (2017/18) compiled from local authorities' administration of their homelessness duties, and Annual Return on the Charter data (2017/18), collected from social landlords on their performance in relation to the Scottish Social Housing Charter. As well as forming part of the analysis presented in this report, these data sources were also used to compile a case study profile used by the research team to inform qualitative fieldwork.

Data collection and analysis took place during the period when local authorities were themselves compiling data for their Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans. This enabled the research team to secure interim datasets providing the baseline position for case study local authorities. The Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan excel tool<sup>45</sup> collects data on the current homelessness position and rehousing situation (that is, the gap between those owed a duty to be rehoused and those in TA at the year-end) with details recorded on the current type of provision, facilities, and level of support, with space for local authorities to project the profile and scale of provision over the next five years.

The data collected in the excel tool is provisional, and it is expected that over time local authorities will improve data collection and monitoring, develop their Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans, and revise their projections. For this reason, case study data from this source is reported anonymously and the focus is on baseline data rather than projections.

### ***(2) Local informant perspectives and documentary research***

The first phase of qualitative data collection in each case study area comprised a series of interviews and/or focus groups with key local stakeholders. Participants were selected based on their ability to describe and comment on the homelessness, temporary accommodation and housing situation in the local authority. In each area, the mix of local informants comprised senior-mid management and frontline staff in local authority homelessness/temporary accommodation and housing options/prevention teams, and (in five out of six case studies) those working in the non-statutory sector, as direct providers of homelessness services (including temporary accommodation), in advocacy and/or campaigning organisations in the homelessness field, and/or in the social housing sector. Table 2 provides a summary of the number of local informants interviewed in each area, and their sector of work.

Interviews and focus groups were conducted face-to-face in almost all cases, with a small number conducted by phone. They covered: the types of TA used in each area; the drivers influencing that TA portfolio; key informants' assessment of the quality of TA provision and its appropriateness given the profile of those accessing it; how demand for TA is managed (through prevention and rehousing activities); the costs of TA (to the local authority and homeless applicant); local informants' views on the likely future of TA in their area and the

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<sup>45</sup> See <http://www.ghn.org.uk/rapid-rehousing-transition-plan/>. Use of the tool is optional, but local authorities must provide details of the data used to underpin their transition plans.

relevance, utility and feasibility of recent national policy activity, namely HARSAG's recommendations and requirements to develop Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans.

*Table 2: Summary of case study local informants*

Case study area	Local informants		Total
	Statutory	Non-statutory	
1. Dundee	5	3	8
2. East Ayrshire	5	0	5
3. East Lothian	6	1	7
4. Edinburgh	3	6	9
5. Glasgow	3	6	9
6. Perth & Kinross	4	3	7
	26	17	43

\* Numbers in the final two columns do not sum to the total figure given in the final row because one local informant had expertise across several case study areas.

Local informants were provided with details about the nature and purpose of the research in writing and verbally prior to participation, including that while their individual contribution would be on an entirely confidential basis, case studies themselves would be identified. It was further explained that they did not have to answer any questions or share information they did not wish to, and could withdraw from the research at any time.

This phase of data collection also involved the identification and analysis of key local documentary evidence on TA provision via online searches and requests for local informants to provide access to such documents. Documents gathered at this stage included local strategies and plans, council committee reports, and third sector and regulator reports.

Case studies are not anonymised in this report to allow use of local TA statistics, documentary evidence and local informant perspectives that may identify particular areas of concern or interest in this report. To protect individual-level anonymity, the local informant attributions attached to direct quotations are very broad (e.g. statutory/non-statutory).

### ***(3) Temporary accommodation resident perspectives***

A core aim of this phase of the study was to gain a better understanding of the experiences and views of those staying in temporary accommodation. In order to achieve this, we conducted a mix of qualitative interviews and focus groups with a total of fifty two individuals with current or recent experience in temporary accommodation across the six case study areas, ranging from six TA residents in East Ayrshire to twelve in Dundee.

Sampling in each area sought to ensure that participants with experiences across the range of the most used TA types in that area were involved. Given available time and resources we were not able to speak to those in every form of TA provision. For instance, we did not speak to any individuals with current or recent experience in Private Sector Leased accommodation, night/care shelters, large chain hotels, and/or 'shared housing' models (upgraded former B&Bs) all of which are in use to some degree in at least one of the case study areas (see chapter 3). Moreover, most of the people we spoke to who were staying or had stayed in social sector TA were in council, rather than housing association, stock.

Those staying in different kinds of TA were accessed in different ways. Hostel/supported accommodation residents were generally accessed via the accommodation and support provider (voluntary or statutory sector), and those sampled in this way very often also had experience in B&B accommodation in the areas where this is used. Some interviewees with



experience in B&B accommodation were also accessed via local authority contacts and/or street outreach services. Those staying in social sector TA were accessed primarily via 'opt in' mailouts sent to a subsample of those in this form of accommodation, either by the local authority directly or by a survey agency acting on behalf of the local authority to whom the contact details of a subsample of TA residents had been securely transferred. A small number of those in social sector TA were accessed via advice and/or support services. Some social sector TA residents had previous experience in B&B and/or hostel accommodation.

Those in social sector TA were particularly hard to access due to a low response to the 'opt-in' mailing inviting participation. As such, the sample includes a smaller proportion of social sector TA residents than planned, and very small numbers in specific local authorities (East Ayrshire, Perth and Kinross and Glasgow), but still 17 overall. Given these constraints and the small numbers of particular categories of TA resident, the data collected in this stage of fieldwork is analysed thematically rather than by case study area. Table 3 provides an overview of the temporary accommodation resident sample.

*Table 3: Summary of case study TA resident participants*

<b>Case study area</b>	<b>Total participants</b>	<b>Sample</b>
1. Dundee	12	8 hostel residents, 4 social sector TA residents
2. East Ayrshire	6	4 hostel residents, 2 social sector TA residents
3. East Lothian	7	4 social sector TA residents, 2 B&B residents and 1 young person in supported hostel accommodation
4. Edinburgh	10	4 hostel residents with recent experience of B&Bs, 3 current rough sleepers with recent experience of B&B and hostel accommodation, 3 social sector TA residents
5. Glasgow	10	8 hostel residents with some experience of B&Bs, 2 social sector TA residents
6. Perth & Kinross	7	6 hostel residents, 1 social sector TA resident
Total	52	

Research with TA residents was conducted via a mix of focus groups and one-to-one interviews, with all focus groups face to face, and interviews conducted either face to face or by phone, depending on how participants were accessed (all those access via mailouts were interviewed by phone), and what suited the individual and (where relevant) service provider in question.

These interviews and focus groups covered: the types of TA people had stayed/were staying in; their views on the quality and appropriateness of any TA they experienced and the pros/cons of different TA types; their experiences of being offered and accessing TA; the length of time they had been in TA; their experiences of support before, during and after spells in TA; their views on the costs and affordability of TA; and the impacts staying in TA had had on them and (if relevant) their family.

Participants were provided with written and verbal information about the nature and purpose of the research and the confidential nature of their contribution before taking part. They were informed that they did not have to answer any questions they did not wish to and could stop the interview/withdraw from the focus group at any time. All participants received a £15 high street voucher to thank them for their time. Participants were asked to complete and sign a consent form confirming their willingness to take part and be recorded on that basis.



Interviews and focus groups in both qualitative stages of the case study fieldwork were recorded with the informed consent of the participant and transcribed verbatim by a professional transcription company. One TA resident wished to participate but not be recorded, and one interview failed to record due to a technical issue. In these case the researcher wrote up detailed notes of the interview, which were coded and analysed alongside the other transcripts.

## **Conclusion**

The next three chapters draw on local informant interviews and analysis of key quantitative data to describe the nature of TA and TA management practices in the six case study areas. TA resident perspectives are explored in chapter 6, before we return to local informant perspectives once again in the final substantive chapter (chapter 7) to consider their views on policy change in this area.

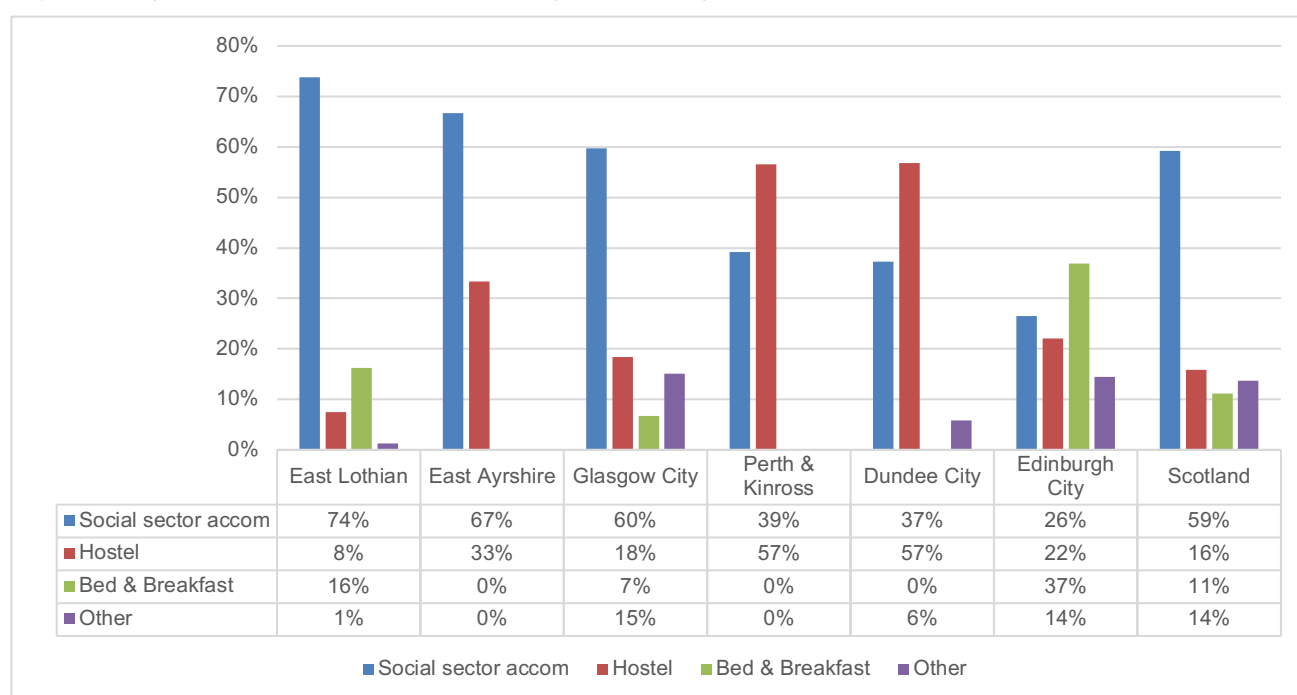
### 3. Temporary accommodation profile

This chapter provides a detailed account of the TA portfolio currently used in the six case study areas, with an analysis also provided of the relative TA ‘pressure’ in the local authorities and explanations for that differential pressure. The rationale underpinning local authorities’ use of particular kinds of TA is explored, alongside the challenges associated with those forms of TA, support provision within TA, and the cost of different kinds of TA across the case studies.

#### Temporary accommodation portfolios

Reflecting our approach to case study selection (see chapter 2), the six case study authorities have very different TA profiles (see figure 2). While social sector self-contained accommodation is by far the dominant form of TA nationally, it is the dominant form of TA in only three of the case study areas – East Lothian, East Ayrshire and Glasgow, with the remaining areas making extensive use of hostel accommodation (Perth and Kinross and Dundee) or in the case of Edinburgh a range of different kinds of TA.

*Figure 2: Type of TA used, March 2018, by case study LA*



Source: Homelessness in Scotland: Annual Publication 2017-18

Notes: the ‘other’ category primarily includes TA leased from the private rented sector, and may also include some TA leased from housing associations and less common forms of TA like mobile homes or caravans. Figures may not add up to 100% due to Scottish Government rounding practices.

The case studies can also be divided into two very broad groups in relation to the diversity of their TA portfolio.

In the first group, are three authorities (Dundee, East Ayrshire and Perth and Kinross) whose TA stock is dominated by two main forms of provision – self-contained social sector and hostel accommodation. Most similar in terms of their TA stock are Dundee and Perth and Kinross, both relying on hostels for the majority of TA placements (57% in both cases) and on social sector accommodation for just over a third of TA. In East Ayrshire the balance is flipped with two thirds of TA in the social sector and a third in hostels. Some of these local authorities had previously used alternative forms of TA, namely B&B and private

sector leased TA, but had moved away from these over time for financial reasons and (particularly in the case of B&Bs) given concerns over quality and appropriateness.

In the second group (East Lothian, Glasgow and Edinburgh), the profile of TA stock is considerably more diverse, with each making some use of each of the four main kinds of TA shown in figure 2

In East Lothian, social sector accommodation nevertheless accounts for the highest proportion of TA in all six areas (74%). This is a mix of LA and housing association stock, with the remaining TA made up mainly of B&B accommodation (16%), but also a very small number of supported accommodation hostels (mostly for young people). East Lothian also make use of a small amount of 'other' accommodation, namely private sector leased accommodation (which they are currently managing 'in house' while procuring a new provider), and (in a reportedly very small number of largely single household cases and for short 'emergency' periods) accommodation in caravan parks, "lodges" or "pods" (East Lothian, statutory).

In Glasgow too social sector accommodation is the dominant form of TA accounting for 60% of placements at 31 March 2018. The remaining TA provision is split between hostel accommodation (18% of TA), 'other' accommodation' understood to be private sector leased TA and B&B accommodation (7% of TA).

Edinburgh has the most diverse TA portfolio of our case study authorities, with social rented accommodation making up a far lower proportion of snapshot TA placements (26%) than other local authorities. Edinburgh is also unique in that B&B accommodation is the most common placement type in the snapshot data presented in figure 2, accounting for 37% of TA at 31 March 2018 (albeit that many of these B&B placements will be for short periods, see below). The city council also use a range of hostels, accounting for just over a fifth of TA and a fairly high proportion (14%) of 'other' accommodation, understood in large part to constitute private sector leased accommodation, albeit that this is described as 'non-traditional' TA in that households tend to stay in it for longer than other forms of TA, and have their priority status for social housing suspended (though they can ask for it back at any time). Edinburgh is also notable for using forms of TA not generally found in other local authority areas. Three examples are:

- 'Short-term/holiday lets'/'interim accommodation flats', self-contained and rented on a night-by-night basis from private landlords;
- 'Rapid Access' accommodation<sup>46</sup> for those sleeping rough, based in a former supported accommodation unit, with access via street outreach teams, and a 'high tolerance approach' to maintain engagement;
- 'Shared Houses', which are conversions of former B&Bs with improved facilities (see below).

All three of these local authorities (Edinburgh, East Lothian and Glasgow) make more use of B&B accommodation than other areas in Scotland (the majority of Scottish LAs make no use B&B at all<sup>47</sup>). Both Edinburgh and East Lothian also report having to sometimes (though rarely) use *out of area* B&B or hotel accommodation as a 'last resort' and on a very

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<sup>46</sup> This service was initially funded via money made available via the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group to tackle rough sleeping during Winter 2017/18. Housing and Economy Committee (2018) *Rapid Access Accommodation with Support for Edinburgh's Rough Sleepers*. Paper for City of Edinburgh Council's Housing and Economy Committee, Item 7.8, 7<sup>th</sup> June 2018. [http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/4413/housing\\_and\\_economy\\_committee](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/4413/housing_and_economy_committee)

<sup>47</sup> Littlewood, M., Watts, B. and Blenkinsopp, J. (2018) *Temporary accommodation in Scotland: Interim Report*. Edinburgh: Social Bite.

short-term basis (e.g. over a weekend before alternative TA is found or if there is no safe place for a high risk applicant to be accommodated).

### Homeless applications and TA pressure

These more diverse TA profiles seem to be largely explained by the relative levels of 'pressure' in the TA system (measured in a number of ways) in these six local authorities, with more pressure driving a more diversified TA portfolio and in particular greater reliance on B&B and 'other' forms of TA provision.

Table 4 compares the number and proportion of all applications with the numbers and proportions in TA. This first point to note is the vastly different scales of homelessness and TA provision across the case study LAs. At the high end, with over 5,000 homeless applications in the last year and over 2,000 households in TA is Glasgow, followed by Edinburgh with over 3,000 applications around 1,400 households in TA. Dundee too deals with relatively high absolute numbers of homeless applications (1,400), but has relative low absolutely numbers in TA (255) in particular compared to East Lothian who dealt with only 780 applicants in 2017/18 but had 400 households in TA at 31 March 2018. Perth and Kinross and East Ayrshire have the smallest numbers in TA (115 and 75 respectively) and comparatively low homeless applications.

The data also gives an indication of the flow of applicants through the system, and our first group of hostel/social sector dominated local authorities (Perth and Kinross, Dundee and East Ayrshire) have a lower proportion of those in TA than would be expected based on their share of homeless applications, indicating a faster flow of homeless people through TA. Our second group of LAs with more diversified TA portfolios (Glasgow, Edinburgh and East Lothian) show clear signs of higher TA pressure and slower flow through TA, with a higher proportion of the households in TA than would be expected from their share of homeless applicants.

*Table 4: Total applications 2017-2018 and TA numbers in March 2018*

Case study	Total number of applications 2017/18	% of applications	No of households in TA 31st March 2018	% of those in TA
Glasgow City	5,204	15%	2,150	20%
Edinburgh City	3,119	9%	1,380	13%
East Lothian	780	2%	400	4%
Dundee City	1,401	4%	255	2%
Perth & Kinross	999	3%	115	1%
East Ayrshire	617	2%	75	1%

Source: Annual Homelessness Statistics 2017-2018

This analysis is supported by an alternative indicator of TA pressure, the number of households in TA at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 as a proportion of the total applicants in 2017/18 owed a duty to find settled accommodation (unintentionally homeless plus unintentionally potentially homeless). Table 5a clearly shows that Perth and Kinross, East Ayrshire and to a lesser extent Dundee have considerably lower TA pressure, with 1 in 4 or fewer of those owed a settled accommodation duty in 2017/18 still owed a duty at the end of the year. In Edinburgh and Glasgow, TA pressure on this indicator is two to three times higher than in

East Ayrshire and Perth and Kinross, with around half of those owed a duty during the year still in TA at year-end. TA pressure is extraordinarily high in East Lothian, with 71% of those owed a duty during the year remaining in TA at the end of the year, suggesting acute blockages in the ‘flow’ of households through TA.

*Table 5a: TA pressure – TA residents at 31 March 2018 as a proportion of all owed a duty 2017-2018*

	<b>TA as % of those owed a duty</b>
East Lothian	71%
Glasgow City	53%
Edinburgh	47%
Dundee City	25%
East Ayrshire	17%
Perth & Kinross	15%
Scotland	40%

*Table 5b: TA pressure - Total applications 2017-2018 as a proportion of all households*

	<b>Applicants as a % of all households</b>
Dundee City	2.0%
Glasgow City	1.8%
East Lothian	1.7%
Perth & Kinross	1.5%
Edinburgh	1.3%
East Ayrshire	1.1%
Scotland	1.4%

Source: Annual Homelessness Statistics 2017-2018

Table 5b shows a potential alternative indicator of pressure across the local authorities – the total number of applicants as a proportion of all households in the area. It does not appear that this measure in and of itself impacts on TA pressure or local authorities’ TA portfolio (specifically, pressures to diversify the kinds of TA used). For instance, while Dundee has the highest population rate of homeless applicants it does not have high TA pressure on our other measures nor a diversified TA portfolio. On the other hand, Edinburgh has a just below average population rate of homeless applicants, a highly diversified TA portfolio and high TA pressures on other measures. This suggests that housing market factors, and how homelessness and TA are managed by local authorities, play more important roles in influencing the nature of and pressure within local authorities’ TA stock than the level of applications.

The qualitative data collected in our case study areas suggests that the reasons for high TA pressure in Edinburgh, East Lothian and Glasgow are distinct. In Edinburgh, the overwhelming driver identified by key informants across the statutory and non-statutory sectors is the “acute shortage of affordable housing” (Edinburgh, statutory):

“the bottom line in Edinburgh is that we don't have the housing stock in terms of the affordable housing... That is the big, big issue which surrounds all of these discussions

around, whether it be rough sleeping, whether it be bed and breakfast, temporary accommodation, all those issues.” (Edinburgh, non-statutory)

“The big flaw is just the amount, there's not enough supply and it's a known thing. We work very closely with the council and they share these concerns in relation to the supply of housing. There's not enough.” (Edinburgh, non-statutory)

This reflects the combined impact of Edinburgh's comparatively small social housing stock (15% compared to 23% nationally) and the high proportion of PRS accommodation (26% of stock compared to 15% nationally) with high rents<sup>48</sup>.

High TA pressure in East Lothian similarly seems to reflect housing market pressures, namely high demand for social housing (albeit with higher levels of new build social housing more recently), low turnover of social housing and a relatively small, expensive and high demand private rented sector. A specific factor reported in East Lothian also appears to be the very low local authority rent levels compared to housing association rents, which according to local informants means those in TA are often less willing to consider housing association properties (albeit that the stock of such properties is in any case small, at 5% of the housing stock compared to 11% nationally). A further compounding factor is the lack of smaller move-on accommodation for single person households (see chapter 5), which is seen to slow move-on from TA.

On some of the measures reported above East Lothian appears to have higher pressure TA than in Edinburgh (see table 5a). This pattern is replicated in the length stay in TA statistics considered in chapter 5, and is somewhat counterintuitive given the greater availability of social housing stock in East Lothian (24%) compared to Edinburgh (15%). Relevant factors here may be the extremely strong focus on move-on in Edinburgh (see chapter 5), the city's greater use of the private rented sector as a settled housing outcome for homeless households, and greater use of forms of TA associated with shorter stays (B&B and hostels). East Lothian by contrast is a heavy user of social sector TA, in which households are likely to spend the longest periods (see chapter 5).

In Glasgow, by contrast, there is cross-sector consensus that the pressure on TA reflects not a lack of settled housing supply, but a qualitatively distinct set of 'process issues':

“There are process issues, partly around management, leadership and then also within that as well, staffing.” (Glasgow, statutory)

“the analyses that we've done is that housing supply is not the problem we thought it was and that, in general, if the Section 5 referrals come it will generate the offer of housing relatively quickly. The major delay is on our side.” (Glasgow, statutory)

“I think there's been this... misunderstanding and I think that's been blown out of the water in Glasgow. 'It's a demand issue. Demand is excessive and we've got a limited supply', but I think all the recent evidence that's been done in the last couple of years shows that isn't the issue and there is sufficient - more or less sufficient stock within housing associations... We've got enough houses... it's for the council to improve their processes. It's a process driven thing” (Glasgow, non-statutory)

“I think the systems are quite archaic... there's no throughput, if they're not moving out of temporary accommodation and going into the RSL accommodation... then you can

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<sup>48</sup> Scottish Government (2017) *Private Sector Rent Statistics, Scotland, 2010 to 2017*.  
<https://beta.gov.scot/publications/private-sector-rent-statistics-scotland-2010-2017/>



see how it's all just pushing downstream... [it's lack of] flow-through... in Glasgow... [that] would be the principal thing that we've come up against" (Glasgow, non-statutory)

These findings are consistent with the Scottish Housing Regulator's March 2018 report detailing the findings of its review of how effectively Glasgow City Council and housing associations in the city house people who are homeless (part of the regulator's wider work with the council). The regulator identified a series of specific 'process issues' or "inefficiencies, bottlenecks and failure points"<sup>49</sup>, including:

- That the council are not referring enough homeless households to housing associations;
- That the council's 'person-centred' and 'needs-led' approach, while positive for some, is not necessary for all households;
- That the council's phased approach to assessing households' needs duplicates work and can unnecessarily delay referrals to housing associations;
- That a high proportion of homeless households lose contact with the council, often as a result of the long and complex processes involved.

The 'process issues' at play are considered in more depth in this report, including in the 'Support' section in the next chapter and in relation to the length of time people spend in TA in Glasgow in chapter 5.

In line with the local authority and wider sector consensus identified in this study and described above, the regulator's report places primary responsibility for the slow throughput of households through the homeless system in Glasgow with the council, but is also clear that housing associations in Glasgow play an uneven role in housing people who are homeless, with the proportion of available homes let to people who are homeless ranging from 8% in some, to 47% in others, and some housing providers refusing referrals for reasons not permitted under relevant legislation (e.g. a history of rent arrears).

In addition to these well documented 'process issues', Glasgow faces another kind of TA pressure not captured in the indicators above. While there is a cross-sector consensus that the city does not face supply issues in relation to *settled* accommodation, it does face acute issues in ensuring access to *emergency TA*, meaning that the local authority is failing to meet its statutory temporary accommodation duty towards some households, as documented in the latest national homelessness statistics<sup>50</sup> and via evidence collected by Shelter Scotland and others<sup>51</sup>. This statutory sector informant described the problem and current efforts to address it as follows:

"[there are] challenges around securing emergency accommodation for folk who require it... we fall short of meeting demand on a day-to-day basis. How we'll manage that is we'll work with the household to look at if they've got an alternative in terms of being able to go and stay with friends and family. If they are able to do that then they're on an accommodation list and the team will work with TA to get them into accommodation.

<sup>49</sup> p. 8 in Scottish Housing Regulator (2018) *Housing people who are homeless in Glasgow*.

<https://www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/publications/housing-people-who-are-homeless-glasgow>

<sup>50</sup> p.30 in Scottish Government (2018) *Homelessness in Scotland: 2017-18*.

<https://beta.gov.scot/publications/homelessness-scotland-2017-18/>

<sup>51</sup> Shelter Scotland (2017) *Evidence of Gatekeeping in Glasgow City Council*.

[https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/professional\\_resources/policy\\_library/policy\\_library\\_folder/evidence\\_of\\_gatekeeping\\_in\\_glasgow\\_city\\_council](https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/professional_resources/policy_library/policy_library_folder/evidence_of_gatekeeping_in_glasgow_city_council); Anna Evans Housing Consultancy, with Davidson, E. Mandy Littlewood Social Research and Consulting Ltd and Solomon, S. (2014) *Homelessness and Complex Needs in Glasgow*. ; McArdle, H. (2013) *Charities: no room for the homeless*. Herald Scotland, 1st December 2014. <https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/13134261.charities-no-room-for-the-homeless/> ; Shelter Scotland (2017) *Evidence of Gatekeeping in Glasgow City Council*. [https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/professional\\_resources/policy\\_library/policy\\_library\\_folder/evidence\\_of\\_gatekeeping\\_in\\_glasgow\\_city\\_council](https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/professional_resources/policy_library/policy_library_folder/evidence_of_gatekeeping_in_glasgow_city_council)

Then we'll not have to bring them again back and forwards between the office and wherever their friends and family live that they're staying with. We'll give them a call once we've secured accommodation. That's generally secure the next day and the day after in the main... Beyond that, if you've nothing and you're vulnerable, we will make a decision that we will spot purchase within the private sector... we are not turning families away. It's your single male who has not got any pronounced health or social care need, but again they're going on a 'no accommodation found' list and we're working through that list." (Glasgow, statutory)

According to Shelter Scotland records of cases where relevant legislation was breached between July 2016 and November 2017, a high proportion of impacted households *were* vulnerable, with 70% having a mental or physical health issue, or both.

Despite overall TA pressure being substantially less acute in our other three case study authorities, each face particular 'pinch points' in relation to specific groups or household types. In Dundee for instance, the local authority reports severe challenges securing appropriate TA for families. In Perth and Kinross (where there is now a very small TA portfolio) and to a lesser extent East Ayrshire (which retains a comparatively large TA portfolio compared with the number of homeless applicants), officials can face difficulties accommodating households in their preferred location, near their social networks and children's schools. A number of authorities also report specific difficulties finding appropriate accommodation for specific kinds of cases, for instance those subject to Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA).

## **Conclusion**

The profile of TA used by local authorities varies a great deal. While social sector dispersed TFFs are the dominant form of provision nationally, it is a much smaller component in some areas, where hostel and B&B TA play a correspondingly larger role. A distinction can be drawn between local authorities where TA provision is dominated by two forms of provision – self-contained social sector stock and hostel accommodation – and those who have a more diverse portfolio of TA provision spanning social sector TA, hostels, B&B accommodation and 'other' kinds of TA like private sector leasing.

These more diverse TA profiles seem to reflect higher levels of pressure on and lower levels of flow through TA, with high pressure driving diversification to meet demand. The underlying drivers of the high pressure on TA we see in some local authorities varies. On the one hand it can be driven by housing market pressure and a lack of affordable, settled housing. On the other, it can be driven by process issues stemming the flow of households through TA and into available settled accommodation. Areas with lower levels of pressure in TA face their own challenges, including finding settled accommodation for particular household types (e.g. families), voids in social sector or hostel TA, and challenges accommodating households in locations they are happy with. Finding accommodation for very specific kinds of cases, notably those subject to Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements is a challenge across LAs regardless of TA pressure.



## 4. Types of temporary accommodation, support and costs

Having provided an overview of TA portfolios and pressure in the case study authorities in the last chapter, this chapter ‘deep dives’ into local authorities use of, and views on, the three main kinds of TA: social sector self contained TFFs, hostel and B&B, before considering how local authorities manage support provision in TA and the costs of TA.

### Social sector temporary furnished flats

Self-contained social sector TA, the dominant form of accommodation nationally and in three of our case study areas (East Ayrshire, East Lothian and Glasgow) is referred to in a number of different ways across local authority areas, including as ‘temporary furnished flats’ (TFFs), ‘dispersed accommodation’ and ‘networked flats’. Such accommodation is usually provided on a furnished basis.

In our three less pressured areas – Dundee, East Ayrshire and Perth and Kinross – the social sector accommodation used as TA is exclusively local authority, rather than housing association stock, though each area had used housing association stock in the past. Dundee explained moving away from housing association TA for “financial reasons... it was rent/financial” (Dundee, statutory), whereas East Ayrshire emphasised that by managing TA provision “in house” (East Ayrshire, statutory) they are able to achieve fast turn-arounds, minimise voids and run a more responsive service. In Perth and Kinross, handing back the small number of housing association temporary units they previously used was part of a wider programme of work to minimise the use of TA (see below). In Edinburgh and East Lothian a combination of housing association and the local authority’s own stock is used for social sector TA. Given that Glasgow is a stock transfer authority, their large stock of social sector TA is housing association stock.

While social sector TA is often ‘dispersed’ (i.e. located in and amongst mainstream, non-temporary housing), it can also be provided on a single site, for instance where a housing association leases a whole block to the local authority for use as TA. This comes with challenges in East Lothian:

“we’ve got a lot of accommodation that’s blocks of accommodation that basically we don’t see working, all the tenants get to know each other and there’s incidents and things like that... I just feel like never, it doesn’t work, I mean it’s all right, it’s a resource but...it’s very difficult to manage” (East Lothian, statutory)

Issues about the location and surrounding environment of social sector TA were a particular concern for this voluntary sector informant in relation to young people:

“a lot of times, it’s not in the best areas within the local towns. Every town’s got a place that’s got a reputation for being rough or having a bit of drug use, et cetera, and we’ve had that issue in the past. We see an address that a young person is being moved to and we go, ‘Oh, this isn’t the best, it isn’t the greatest’” (East Lothian, non-statutory)

Another statutory sector key informant explained that the location of social sector TA in part reflects the ‘opportunistic’ development of the TA portfolio, and is something that may be reviewed in the near future:

“when it comes to temporary accommodation strategy review, we’ll probably have to disperse the stock much more than we have up until now. So up until now, it’s been opportunistic really... There’s a bit of that swapping over of mainstream but we’ve maybe not done it in a systematic way [and] we’ve got some housing management issues” (East Lothian, statutory)

Social sector TA can also be heavily concentrated in particular areas, something seen as a problematic feature of provision in Glasgow, in that it can separate applicants from their social networks and lead to issues of anti-social behaviour:

“all our temporary accommodation is - it's not all in the wrong place, but we have an over preponderance of it within the north west of the city... We need to rebalance it across the city, because there is a disconnect from people.” (Glasgow, statutory)

“the provision that's given or that's allocated to homelessness... tend to be in the same area. So, you essentially ghettoise places. You send people with very complex needs or complex problems who need support, you send them into a tower block and then put them in an area where all of their neighbours have very similar issues and very similar problems. You ghettoise an area and then, all you're doing after that is you're dealing with anti-social behaviour” (Glasgow, non-statutory)

These sorts of issues inform the management of social sector TA in Perth and Kinross. In the context of their ‘Home First’ transformation of homelessness services (see chapter 7) they have a much reduced portfolio of social sector TA, and use ‘flipping’ (or conversions of TA to mainstream secure tenancies) to move their stock out of TA:

“we don't like to keep them [TA units] in the same areas because... they stick out and it creates an issue in the community. It's unfair on the person that goes in there... So... if somebody was in one of those dispersed [flats] and the furniture had been there for a set period, we would just say, ‘Well, if it meets your needs, are you happy for that move’? And maybe convert it [into a secure tenancy] and take something else and put it in the [TA] stock, but... We've actually been converting and not replacing because we're trying to keep our pool as small as possible.” (Perth and Kinross, statutory)

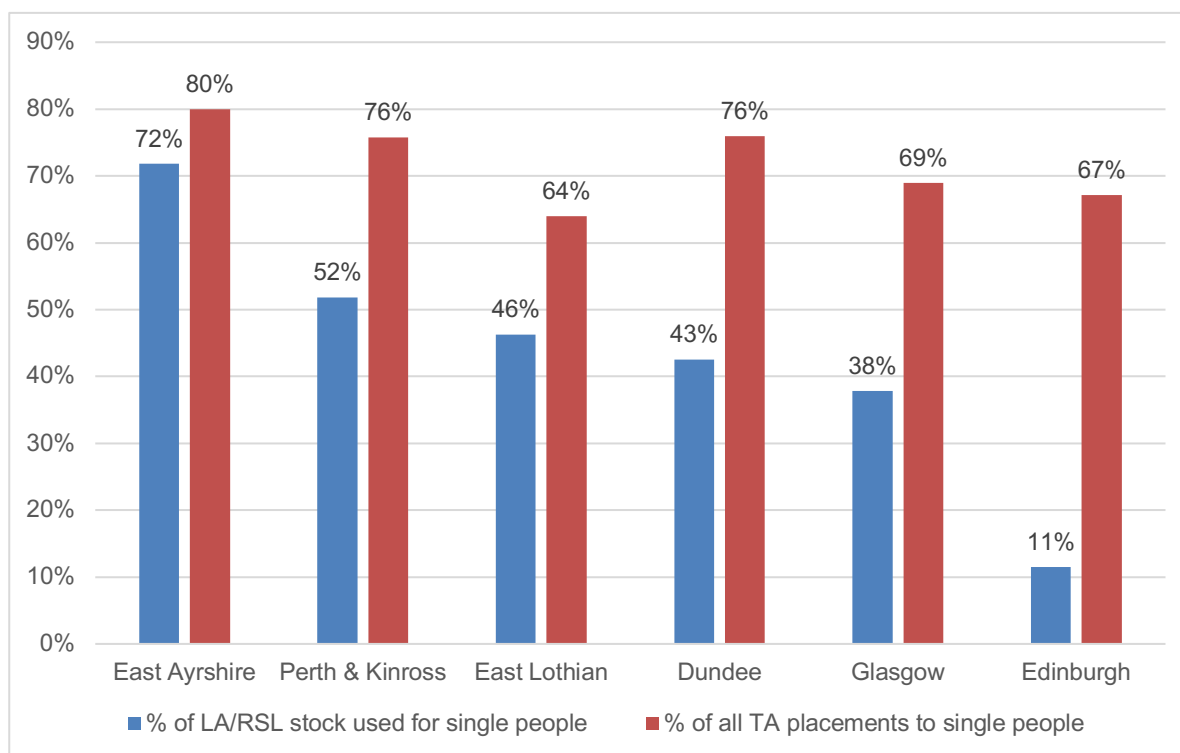
This is in contrast to Dundee who manage a more stable stock of social sector TA:

“I think in an ideal world every local authority maybe want to turn them over every two or three years, ideally. We've had the same flats - we've had a few for 20-odd years now. Which is good in a way because it shows... that the neighbours aren't creating merry hell about [it and we're]... able to manage them. So, yes, we have had an awful lot of properties on our books for a number of years.” (Dundee, statutory)

A number of local authorities noted issues with the location of their TA stock not related to its concentration or impact on neighbourhoods and housing management, but in relation to households’ preferences for TA in particular places that they are not always able to accommodate. This was a particular issue in more rural authorities with highly dispersed outlying settlements, though also mentioned by key informants in the city-based case studies. Local authorities reported various means of managing these issues and the TA refusals that can result, including offering an initial and very short term TA placement (including in B&B accommodation) while a more suitable option is found and/or offering travel (taxis or bus passes) to children’s schools, householders’ medical appointments (e.g. to chemists for those needing regular addiction-related medication) and house viewings.

Local authorities vary in their use of social sector stock for households without children. While in all local authorities there seems to be a mix of household types in social sector TA, this form of TA is prioritised for families, with access for single people particularly constrained and exceptional in some areas. Figure 3 confirms that in all case study areas single people are under-represented in social sector TA compared to their representation in the TA occupant population more broadly.

Figure 3: % of social sector TA placements used for single people, compared with all TA placements to single people



Source: HL3 dataset 2017-2018

The gap is most stark in Edinburgh, where just 11% of placements in the social sector TA are to single people, despite single people accounting for two thirds of TA placements overall. This is likely to reflect the very high demand for and constrained supply of TA in Edinburgh described above. The next starkest gap is found in Dundee, however, an area with lower TA pressure according the indicators discussed above. This is likely to reflect the availability of hostel accommodation in the area, high demand for the city's limited social sector TA from families, and – as this local informant explains – concerns about the behaviour of single households in such accommodation:

“of the 70 dispersed flats that I mentioned, about 40 of them technically are for families but the reason I say that is unfortunately we have about 32 apartments networked that are supposed to be for single people, but half of them are full of families because of the demand we've had from families over the last year or two... it's a real nightmare” (Dundee, statutory)

“There's two reasons why we would look to get a single person into one of the hostels and it's probably because of their vulnerabilities and their support needs or they have challenging behaviour and they need supervision or a combination of both. However, we might meet somebody...[there has] been [one] quite recently, actually. So the person that's interviewing them phoned and said, 'I really don't want to book her into [a hostel]... she's about 43, no issues, relationship breakdown, desolate, brand-new to the service. Is there not a network flat?' Those are the sorts of clients we would use for our network flats... I've got to be honest it's also if we can trust them in one of their flats because it's a fully furnished flat with £4,000 worth of furniture in there. We have to keep the neighbours sweet.... we need to be comfortable that they're going to behave in the flat. We need to be comfortable that they're not going to get their pals up to steal my furniture” (Dundee, statutory)

In Glasgow too we see a fairly sizeable gap between the proportion of TA placements for single people and proportion of social sector TA used for this group (69% against 38%). A voluntary sector key informant explained that social sector accommodation is “largely... not for people with multiple and complex needs, so they tend to be in congregate accommodation and that either creates or exacerbates issues” (Glasgow, non-statutory) (see below). This gap may also be partly explained by the strong emphasis on ‘tenancy readiness’ reported in Glasgow, which may provide a barrier to single households (and especially young people) accessing social sector TA (see chapter 5).

The gap is smallest in East Ayrshire, where 80% of TA placements are to single people and only a slightly lower proportion (72%) of social sector TA is used for single people. This likely reflects lower levels of pressure on TA in the area. Indeed, the local authority report sometimes putting single households into two-bed social sector TA if there are no one-bed properties available. Nevertheless, there is a presumption against housing single people with the *most* complex needs in social sector TA, with those who are “particularly chaotic” accommodated in hostel provision (East Ayrshire, statutory).

Local authorities report varying practices in relation to the support provided to those in social sector TA who need it. In considering these different approaches, it is important to note that a number of local authorities emphasised that many households in social sector TA *do not need support* beyond rehousing. The support needs of those in social sector TA will vary depending on TA approaches to allocating households to particular types of TA. A key distinction here appears to be whether support for those in social sector TA (where needed) is provided ‘in house’ by the local authority (as appears to be the case in East Lothian and East Ayrshire) or by external/specialist support agencies (as is the case in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee, for example). In East Lothian, local informants describe the support available to those in social sector TA as primarily focused on tenancy management and rents, but with offers also able to provide “a bit of support” (East Lothian, statutory) and with more specific support provided to people in particular groups, e.g. care experienced young people in touch with the Through Care After Care team. In East Ayrshire, temporary accommodation support workers complete a support plan with all those in TA, including those in social sector TA or staying with friends and family, and will then work through that support plan with TA residents, which might involve: “making referrals for the likes of a GP, or a dentist, or to access mental health services, or to help them address former debt by looking at repayment plans. It could be anything... it really just depend on the level of support that's required” (East Ayrshire, statutory).

In Glasgow, local informants expressed sharply differing views on the adequacy of support available to those in social sector TA.

“there's an element of abandonment, so the person gets their flat, and there's questions about conditions, questions about the state of the accommodation, the furniture but there's just a concern that they're left to it.” (Glasgow, voluntary sector)

The perceived inadequacy of floating support in Glasgow was also raised in the *Eradicating Core Homelessness* study conducted in 2017<sup>52</sup>. Another voluntary sector participant, however, described the retendering and redesign of the floating support service available to TA residents in Glasgow a few years ago in very positive terms, noting it's greater flexibility and the ability of providers to personalise support to the individual:

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<sup>52</sup> Littlewood, M., Bramley, G. Fitzpatrick, S. and Wood, J. (2017) *Eradicating 'Core Homelessness' in Scotland's Four Largest Cities: Providing an Evidence Base and Guiding a Funding Framework*. Edinburgh: Social Bite.

“people can dip in and out of it, they can request support times that are more appropriate for themselves. There's a whole range of - it's a much better way of working” (Glasgow, non-statutory)

A different non-statutory sector local informant identified a “vacuum” in the provision of support provided to those in social sector TA in Glasgow, but particularly as regards their *rehousing* needs, rather than their support needs per se. This vacuum arises because the local authority are focused on undertaking an extensive support needs assessment, notwithstanding that “a lot of people living in temporary furnished flats don't need any serious levels of support anyway. All they're looking for is a permanent place to live” and that where floating support services are needed and provided, these are focused on addressing day-to-day support needs not moving the household on from TA. He added that housing association whose stock is being used as TA “aren't particularly involved in engaging with” those staying in it, because the accommodation is on long-term lease to the local authority. As such, social sector TA residents tend to miss out on the “wider offer” of housing association (for instance advice provision and community engagement opportunities), as well as not receiving ‘proactive’ support to find them a settled housing outcome (see also chapter 5).

Case study local authorities reported varying trends in the scale of the social sector TA portfolio. In Glasgow and East Lothian the amount of social sector TA has been stable recently (at around 1,300-1,400 units in Glasgow and around 250-320 units in East Lothian). According to one statutory sector key informant in Glasgow, this reflects the inelastic nature of TA in the city in a context where they see “It is very clear we do not have enough... temporary accommodation in order to meet the demands” (Glasgow, statutory). Local authority key informants explained that it is “very difficult” to acquire new social sector TA when “you've got no stock of your own” (Glasgow, statutory). However, these comments are in stark opposition to the perspective of a key informant from the housing association sector, who suggested that a significant minority of social sector TA stock in the city is “lying empty”, something they primarily attributed to “a lack of housing management expertise” and insufficient focus on “proactively managing stock” (Glasgow, non-statutory) with the relevant local authority teams. This would suggest in line with the consensus described above that issues about TA in Glasgow are in substantial part about access to TA and local authority *processes*, rather than supply.

In East Lothian, the local authority were optimistic about being able to increase the stock of social sector TA if they decided to, but saw this as a “delicate thing” given that transferring mainstream social housing stock to TA risks “compromising our ability to deliver long-term mainstream outcomes” (East Lothian, statutory) and “compound[ing] waiting times and pressure for mainstream [housing]” (East Lothian, statutory).

Two case study areas (East Ayrshire and Edinburgh) had recently increased their portfolio of social sector TA. East Ayrshire reported having *quadrupled* the number of LA social sector units in their TA portfolio over several years, leaving them in a position of having “the numbers, different types, and the different areas to cope with the demand”. Expanding the social sector TA stock further, if needed, also appeared to be a fairly straightforward option that “can happen fairly quickly” (East Ayrshire, statutory). Despite this far less pressurised environment, the trade-off between using social housing stock as TA or settled accommodation was apparent in some specific high demand areas:

“There's obviously more demand for temporary accommodation within Kilmarnock than the outlying areas.... But if we were to reflect the demand within Kilmarnock and replace temporary accommodation and move it more into the town, then that would be

taking houses and properties out of the mainstream letting pool.” (East Ayrshire, statutory)

Edinburgh has also expanded the numbers of local authority properties used as TA during 2018, adding a further 26 properties to the 389 already used as TA<sup>53</sup>. The small scale of this increase reflects the acute supply pressure and shortage of affordable housing in Edinburgh. Local informants described the difficulty associated with using more social housing TA:

“You give more property to temp, you're taking away from permanent and all that's really going to do is mean people are going to spend even longer in temp just because there's not the throughput of permanent accommodation and it's just that vicious circle.” (Edinburgh, third sector)

This is one of the key reasons why private sector leasing has become a core part of the TA offer in Edinburgh.

In Dundee and Perth and Kinross, the stock of social sector TA has been reduced in recent years. In Dundee this reflects that they were carrying increasingly high levels of voids in this TA, which was seen as unsustainable. The decision to reduce the number of ‘networked flats’ went alongside parallel efforts to reduce and minimise demand via homelessness prevention:

“we were constantly sitting with a number of voids... it got to the point where we couldn't continually argue well that'll change... It's only rent loss, it doesn't matter... so we gave up. We halved the number of family flats. In tandem with that, we embraced the new culture of a preventative approach” (Dundee, statutory)

As noted above, Dundee are now struggling to find appropriate accommodation for families.

In Perth and Kinross the reduction in social sector TA is part of a series of changes instigated by their ‘Home First’ transformation agenda seeking to redesign homelessness services, reduce demand for TA via prevention and rapid rehousing. Initial successes mean they are considering reducing their now very small stock of social sector TA further:

“We try where possible with a family to get them straight into permanent accommodation as much as possible and that's why we're looking at can we reduce that 27 even more, based on current demand and things like that” (Perth and Kinross, statutory)

## Hostels

Hostels accommodation is ‘congregate’ accommodation provided within a building<sup>54</sup>, and often (though not always) involves the provision of meals, with ‘communal’ facilities (e.g. a TV room). This is the second most common form of TA nationally based on snapshot data and the dominant form of TA in two of our case study areas (Dundee and Perth and Kinross). It also accounts for a significant proportion of TA in East Ayrshire, Edinburgh and Glasgow, albeit with the profile of hostel stock varying across these areas. In East Ayrshire (where the numbers in TA are very small, see table 4) one LA-run 20 bed hostel dominates provision, whereas in the other four areas where numbers are higher, there is a more diverse stock of hostel accommodation owned by a mixture of the local authority itself,

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<sup>53</sup> Housing and Economy Committee (2018) *Homelessness Task Force – Actions, Recommendations and Outcomes*. Paper for City of Edinburgh Council's Housing and Economy Committee, Item 7.7, 7th June 2018.

[http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/4413/housing\\_and\\_economy\\_committee](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/4413/housing_and_economy_committee)

<sup>54</sup> See <https://www.gov.scot/Resource/0047/00474869.pdf>

registered providers/housing associations and voluntary sector providers. East Lothian stands out as having a very small proportion of hostel-based TA, with less than one in ten TA occupants in hostels at March 2018. These are primarily 'supported accommodation' units for young people.

Hostels vary substantially in terms of their size, the building format, the level of support provided, and whether they are 'generic' or 'specialist' i.e. target a specific group. In the city-based case study areas Dundee stands out as having a high number of comparatively large hostels (in the 30-50 bed range). In Edinburgh and Glasgow, there is a relatively large and diverse set of hostels ranging from large, 'generic' units (reaching up to 60 beds in Glasgow, but in the 25-40 range in Edinburgh) to small 'specialist' units accommodating as few as 7 or 8 individuals at a time and usually with more intensive support. This Glasgow key informant describes hostel provision as follows:

"We've... got a mixture of relatively large-scale communal living environments. I think the largest are around about 60 beds down through to two-year interim accommodation which is much smaller at around about eight to twelve beds. So it's a real mixed bag. I think we've got around about 600 units of that communal living stuff within the system" (Glasgow, statutory).

Hostel accommodation also varies in its format, ranging from units where people only have a room of their own, share bathrooms and access catered meals communally; to units where people have access to shared kitchen facilities; to units where residents occupy in effect self-contained flats but still have access to communal facilities like common rooms. Associated with these different kinds of provision are varying levels of service charge, ranging from small contributions of £8-10 a week which cover basic utility bills, to higher charges of £35 a week which cover all meals and bills. Accommodation providers sometimes used a record of service charge payment as a basis for references for residents when moving into settled accommodation when asked for one, and sometimes described it as a useful means of helping residents to learn how to budget. It was also acknowledged however that levels of service charge were sometimes a key source of dissatisfaction for hostel residents and could also be a source of stress, with one local informant in Glasgow suggesting that being 'chased' for service charge arrears could 'crowd out' a focus on supporting the resident, and another suggesting that people sometimes 'time their stays' according to when service charges are due, leaving to avoid payment.

Hostels across the case study areas clearly have very different kinds and levels of support provision within them, ranging from 'generic' hostels to highly specialist provision catering for victims of domestic abuse/violence, young people or those with addiction issues. There is a strong correlation between the size of hostel accommodation, the level of support provided and the extent to which it is targeted at a particular group, with larger units tending to be 'generic' rather than specialist, with lower levels of support. For example, Edinburgh and Glasgow both have small specialist units catering for those with severe addiction issues as well as larger scale provision not designed or commissioned with a particular needs profile in mind:

"There are a range of different types at the moment we have the local authority... currently [we have] an assessment [hostel]... [where] they do assessment - for people to then move on to other forms of sometimes rehab, sometimes supported accommodation. We then have a range of supported accommodations which should theoretically be for specific groups with particular support needs... Then we have other places, so we have a place... which is just a generic hostel, I suppose... it's supposed

to be more of an emergency accommodation but it's sometimes used as a kind of longer-stay place" (Glasgow, non-statutory)

Starkly varying levels of support within hostels was also evident in Dundee, which currently operates a highly structured "three tier system" (Dundee, statutory) of an assessment centre, 'direct access' hostels which people can access quickly "almost no questions asked" (Dundee, statutory) and 'resettlement' hostels:

"[the assessment centre/hostel] isn't supported, then direct access... are certainly supervised and there is support there... the hostels try to ensure that the clients really have to have a structure to their day and adhere to a programme but then the resettlement programme - the resettlement hostels take that to the next level of saying, 'Yes, you've done well in [the direct access hostel], we don't think you're ready for a tenancy yet but we feel you're ready to move on to resettlement so you get your own flat and rather than go for communal meals, you're making your own meals.'" (Dundee, statutory)

"It's very much we're working on the stepped model at the minute... basically, from here [Direct access hostel], people generally would go to differently supported accommodation... so we get quite a few people moving up from here if it's been identified there's a deficit in skills, or what-have-you. They need a bit more time, whether that's to build up relationships with external agencies, or whether that's about skills in keeping a flat.... The support [in the resettlement hostels] is much more proactive, rather than reactive, so you're looking at things like budgeting, good neighbourliness, cooking, cleaning, and we can act almost as a referee for people moving on to independent accommodation". (Dundee, non-statutory)

This set-up aligns very closely with 'staircase' models of homelessness provision, which have been criticised as creating multiple barriers preventing homeless households navigating this staircase out of homelessness and TA<sup>55</sup>.

The interim report for this study and a number of other publications<sup>56</sup> have highlighted concerns about the quality and appropriateness of hostel accommodation across Scotland, and local informants involved in this stage of the study articulated similar concerns and challenges. Local informants acknowledged that hostels vary in terms of their physical quality and state of repair, with descriptions of particular hostels ranging from "quite modern, really good quality" (Dundee, statutory), and "recently... refurbished" (East Ayrshire, statutory) to "a bit tired" (Perth and Kinross, statutory), but the key challenges

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<sup>55</sup> Sahlin, I. (2005) *The staircase of transition: Survival through failure*. Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research, 18(2), pp.115-135; Johnsen, S. and Teixeira, L. (2010) *Staircases, elevators and cycles of change 'Housing First' and other housing models for homeless people with complex support needs*. London: Crisis.

<sup>56</sup> Scottish Parliament Local Government and Communities Committee (2018) *Report on Homelessness*. SP Paper 279. <http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/103620.aspx>; Glasgow Homelessness Network (2018) *Can We Fix Homelessness in Scotland? Aye We Can*. Glasgow: Glasgow Homelessness Network. [http://www.ghn.org.uk/shien/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2017/11/Aye\\_We\\_Can\\_Final\\_Report\\_2018-1.pdf](http://www.ghn.org.uk/shien/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2017/11/Aye_We_Can_Final_Report_2018-1.pdf); Equal Opportunities Committee (2014) *Having and Keeping a Home – 2015 Follow-up*. [http://www.parliament.scot/S4\\_EqualOpportunitiesCommittee/Inquiries/Having\\_and\\_Keeping\\_a\\_home\\_-\\_2014\\_follow-up\\_summary\\_paper.pdf](http://www.parliament.scot/S4_EqualOpportunitiesCommittee/Inquiries/Having_and_Keeping_a_home_-_2014_follow-up_summary_paper.pdf); Fitzpatrick, S., Pawson, H., Bramley, G. Wilcox, S. and Watts, B. (2015) *The Homelessness Monitor: Scotland 2015*. London: Crisis. [https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/236831/the\\_homelessness\\_monitor\\_scotland\\_2015.pdf](https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/236831/the_homelessness_monitor_scotland_2015.pdf); Mackie, P., Johnsen, S. and Wood, J. (2017) *Ending Rough Sleeping: What Works?* London: Crisis. <https://www.crisis.org.uk/ending-homelessness/homelessness-knowledge-hub/services-and-interventions/ending-rough-sleeping-what-works-an-international-evidence-review/>; Littlewood, M., Bramley, G. Fitzpatrick, S. and Wood, J. (2017) *Eradicating 'Core Homelessness' in Scotland's Four Largest Cities: Providing an Evidence Base and Guiding a Funding Framework*. Edinburgh: Social Bite.



associated with this form of TA concern mismatches between the level of support offered and that needed by service users and issues associated with living in congregate environments.

Local informants in Edinburgh and Glasgow in particular, noted that pressure on TA often meant there is a 'mis-match' between people's needs and the kinds of TA they are allocated:

"we really have to rethink all of this, because is there much difference between someone who is in [large, 'generic' hostel], [and] in [specialist addiction hostel], apart from the amount of money it costs to keep them there?... The exact same type of person could live at [both] and it's just an accident of time of where they are" (Glasgow, statutory)

"they [hostels commissioned as 'generic'] have people with quite significant challenges because there is nowhere else to go." (Edinburgh, statutory)

It follows that an individual with the same kinds of needs could find themselves in accommodation where "Staff will look after people and look out for people, but there isn't a therapeutic regime" to units where "there are some fairly intense interventions... also medical interventions [and] It's highly supported. The staff team will be of a higher trained nature" (Glasgow, statutory).

Local informants across case studies that make more extensive use of hostels raised specific concerns about the availability of specialist addiction and mental health support within hostels:

"in a couple of the hostels... [you] don't see much else happening, to be honest. It's like there's your bottle of vodka for the day or there's your four cans of beer or whatever and it's, yes, you've got alcohol issues. That's why they're in here but I suppose I've not witnessed a great deal of support to address it. They're enabled to continue with their drinking and maybe not focusing enough on other areas; why they keep drinking, the root causes sort of thing." (Glasgow, non-statutory)

"We would really prefer if we were doing more [addiction] recovery work within the centres [hostels], more holistic work on these things. We would like to be involved with the statutory providers but we find we are a bit let down... [statutory addiction services are] not available on the days we want them to come or they sign people off their scripts without telling anybody. They don't communicate with us the same way that maybe third sector [addiction support services do]... that is where we probably have our biggest issue." (Dundee, non-statutory)

In Dundee, there appears to be a particularly acute issue addressing the needs of hostel residents and homeless households suffering from mental health and addiction issues simultaneously, as described by two separate voluntary sector local informants:

"mental health services and drug services aren't great bedfellows sometimes, and one will say, 'Well, we can't deal with anything until you deal with this', do you know what I mean, so, ultimately, we're left with people who can't access either service." (Dundee, non-statutory)

"The other problem we have is between people with mental health problems and the drug issues... dual diagnosis... nobody will pick them up... there has to be some sort of services provided to those particular people that fall into that category, but we do find that we're abandoned a bit on that one." (Dundee, non-statutory)

The combined impact of congregate accommodation models, varying levels of support, a mismatch of support needs and placements; and long stays in TA are seen to be particularly damaging in Glasgow. This local informant's comments indicate clearly that there may be a direct relationship between issues with hostel accommodation and the level of addiction issues within the homeless population:

"[it] can either create issues for people that didn't have them previously, or exacerbate existing issues that people already had. It's not uncommon to hear stories of people going into a supported accommodation project with just a bit of vulnerability, maybe a mental health issue, and coming out with a full-blown addictions issue ... we've ended up now, in a crazy situation where people who have alcohol issues primarily are around people that have issues primarily with drugs. That creates crossover, which creates further addiction issues, which further complicates that person's support needs. When folk are in these types of situations for extended periods of time, that effectively means that they are surrounded by things that are not useful in terms of any form of recovery."  
(Glasgow, non-statutory)

In Dundee, local informants described challenges associated with their 'three tier' hostel system, particular for the group of individuals with multiple and complex needs including addiction issues, who having been excluded from other hostels due to anti-social behaviour and related issues. One statutory local informant described how this group can then "languish" in the assessment centre, where they are placed as a last resort but which is intended only for short stays and where there is minimal support. Serial exclusions from hostel accommodation in Edinburgh are reportedly managed by placing individuals in local authority self-contained flats with additional support:

"There are some people that would maybe struggle, if you like, they've been excluded from everywhere else. They would tend to go into our own properties because we can manage them better. Council staff manage the council properties and have housing officers and wardens et cetera all attached to the spare flats." (Edinburgh, statutory)

Exclusions were also highlighted as an issue in Glasgow, which key informants identify as directly reflecting on the suitability of hostel accommodation for some individuals and linked to levels of rough sleeping in the city:

"exclusion stuff... confronts [our] locations team day in, day out... it's part of a wider discussion I think about the suitability of communal living environments for quite challenging people... Communal living environments doesn't suit some of our most challenging people. Our most entrenched rough sleepers frankly are on the streets because they can't cope with communal living environments" (Glasgow, statutory)

Exclusions or 'barring' tend to be used for the most chaotic service users who put themselves or others at risk due to violent behaviour, damage to property or fire-raising. The need to more effectively engage with and support very challenging individuals has been highlighted for a number of years. Work on homelessness and complex needs in Glasgow in 2014<sup>57</sup> identified a range of approaches to addressing homelessness and complex needs from case study research, including the importance of specialist, highly skilled staff either trained in or at least aware of Psychologically Informed Environment approaches, as well as an element of 'assertive outreach'. There were also examples of specialist mental health services working jointly and co-located with homelessness

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<sup>57</sup> Anna Evans Housing Consultancy, with Davidson, E. Mandy Littlewood Social Research & Consulting Ltd and Solomon, S. (2014) *Homelessness and Complex Needs in Glasgow*. <http://aehousing.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/FINAL-SUMMARY-ON-AEHC-WEB-30.1.15.pdf>

services. A 'pathway' approach to case management was identified as the ideal, with partners 'keeping hold' of people until they are settled in secure accommodation. That work identified the need for resettlement support that is flexible in its intensity, and has the option to go on for long periods of time to ensure long-term tenancy sustainment. Since the 2014 study, the City Ambition Network (CAN) in Glasgow has developed a multiagency approach to complex needs<sup>58</sup>, which aims to improve the experiences of this group, help them access safe emergency accommodation and settled accommodation, and maintain engagement with services. Many of the CAN service users are those previously (or currently) barred from various TA across the city (see chapter 7).

Refusal or reluctance to take up hostel accommodation (rather than being excluded from it) are also a challenge in some case study areas. This appears to be a particular problem in Dundee:

"Sometimes people have come here, seen it, and thought, no, but are too polite to say. [they] Just go away and don't come back!... Sometimes people just say, 'No, it's not for me', and sometimes people will maybe see other people that are here and just kind of [leave]" (Dundee, non-statutory)

"The other dissatisfaction sometimes is there's a number of people there that they're associated with that they're trying to – if they're trying to get off drink or drugs or crime. There's other people in there... that they've fell out with in the past or something." (Dundee, statutory)

Such issues, alongside an oversupply of this kind of TA in Dundee, have meant that hostels have been operating with low occupancy/high void rates. This, combined with wider concerns about how well hostel accommodation meets people's needs, has led to a transformation agenda to remodel TA provision in the city which is now underway (see chapter 7).

Perth and Kinross is also facing low levels of occupancy in its hostels, and currently reviewing the causes of this. A specific issue has been identified with LGBT young people, relating not to concerns around safety or other residents, but the ethos of one hostel run by a faith-based organisation:

"with the LGBT stuff... some of the feedback that we've had from particularly younger people is they're frightened to go into these types of placements because of the religion... they'll just, 'No, I'd rather just sleep rough'" (Perth and Kinross, statutory)

Local informants in East Ayrshire identified a series of challenges in relation to their hostel accommodation. On the one hand, and as above, they reported that "there are a lot of people who won't go near the hostel" and "would rather sleep in their car than go in" (East Ayrshire, statutory). On the other, they report that some homeless applicants with addiction issues actively seek out and prefer hostel accommodation as a place where "they'll be able to score" (East Ayrshire, statutory):

"there's mostly single males within the hostel who have addiction problems and they know each other. So for example, one person coming out of prison knows there might be two in there they'll already know and they're still looking to continue with obviously their addiction so it's easier for them to be a wee group. Not within the hostel because we don't allow it but outwith the hostel" (East Ayrshire, statutory)

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<sup>58</sup> See <https://www.glasgowcitymission.com/about-us/what-we-do/city-ambition-network.php>

In addition to these issues surrounding access and entry into hostel accommodation, East Ayrshire report parallel issues in relation to exit from hostels for some residents, hinting at issues of institutionalisation well-rehearsed in the research literature<sup>59</sup> in this exchange between two statutory sector key informants:

Participant 1: [the hostel accommodation is] really comfortable.

Participant 2: It is, they don't want to move.

Participant 1: It's because it's clean, because it's fresh, and the support is right on site.

Participant 2: They get good support... They don't have any responsibilities whilst they're there and usually when they go into the hostel, they are fairly chaotic, they don't...

Participant 1: Yes, they're very chaotic so they like what attention they get.... And the food and the heat and...

Participant 2: The support, et cetera.

Participant 1: So they're quite happy and they don't want to go...

They went on to explain that support staff will work with hostel residents to address these issues and:

“look at the fact that they can't stay there forever in temporary accommodation, and that... there is also the expectation that... they will either take steps themselves, or through the help that we can give them to find secure accommodation... I guess [hostel TA is] taking that personal responsibility away when they're in a normal secure tenancy: paying the bills, the heating of the property, and the cleaning and the decoration and everything, you know? We're trying to keep people equipped and ready for their next home, because it is just temporary accommodation” (East Ayrshire, statutory)

It is therefore clear that the findings of this study reinforce the challenges associated with hostel provision already clearly articulated elsewhere. This section highlights, in particular, the logistical challenges local authorities themselves face managing hostels as a form of TA (over and above concerns for the wellbeing of those accommodated within it, see chapter 6), including commissioning/running hostels of an appropriate and manageable size, ensuring that appropriate support is available within hostels to meet the needs of the client group, matching individuals appropriately to particular units where they can access the support they need and escape the individuals/behaviours the wish or need to, managing exclusions from hostels and associated impacts on other services and levels of rough sleeping, refusals to enter hostels, and the ‘institutionalising’ effects of hostels which can further exacerbate the needs of an already complex and vulnerable population.

That being said, several caveats should be borne in mind: first, as described above, hostel provision varies extensively and across in a number of dimensions. Local informants were thus keen to avoid overgeneralising about hostels, and in particular emphasised a difference between larger ‘generic’ and lower support hostels, and smaller specialist high support models. Moreover, some local informants (especially those in Dundee) emphasised that much of their hostel provision is regulated and subject to an inspection regime, with standards thus generally not falling below the level required by the Care Inspectorate and

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<sup>59</sup> Bush-Geertsema, V., and Sahlin, I., (2007) *The Role of Hostels and Temporary Accommodation*. European Journal of Homelessness 1(1); McMordie, L. (2018) *Chronic Homelessness and Temporary Accommodation Placement in Belfast*. Edinburgh: I-SPHERE, Heriot-Watt University.

remedial action taken if it does<sup>60</sup>. In Glasgow, local informants recognised significant improvements in hostel provision over time, in particular due to the Hostel Closure programme, albeit that significant challenges with the nature of provision remain. In other local authority areas, Dundee in particular, reforms were already in train to substantially remodel and improve hostel provision at the time of fieldwork.

Second, while there was general and strong acceptance of and support for recent recommendations calling for a shift towards rapid rehousing by default and thus a presumption against the need for hostel stays for most individuals, almost all participants acknowledged an important continuing role for small scale, high support models for a small group of individuals. This Glasgow key informant's comments were typical:

"I think [for some people] you have to see it in the realms of less a housing response and more a community care response, that there are people who just are not able to live in the community and it's about their pronounced social care needs. You're talking about very small numbers of people I think." (Glasgow, statutory)

This is consistent with the recommendations of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group, whose vision of 'rapid rehousing by default' acknowledges that rapid rehousing may not yet be suitable for everyone (for a fuller discussion of local informant views on the Action Group's recommendations, see chapter 7).

### **Bed and breakfast accommodation**

The six case study authorities make very different use of B&B accommodation as TA. B&B is commonly used in the three 'pressured' local authorities identified above. Edinburgh stands out as being uniquely reliant on B&Bs, and has seen continued and rapid growth in B&B use in recent years.

East Lothian is also a high B&B user, albeit with much lower absolute numbers in this form of TA (65 in March 2018) and, unlike Edinburgh has seen a reduction in B&B use over the last year (from 75 in March 2017). Local authority staff report having to use B&B as a 'fall back' when alternative suitable TA is not available, and in particular to accommodate those with complex needs given the very low availability of supported hostel accommodation in the area:

"We would like to see people moving straight into temporary accommodation that's suitable to their needs, we would like to offer supported accommodation to people who [have] maybe got complex needs but we just don't have it. So bed and breakfast is a fall-back position" (East Lothian, statutory)

Seven per cent of TA residents in Glasgow were in B&B accommodation in March 2018, with levels stable over the last few years but the absolute numbers in B&B high by comparison to other B&B using authorities (145 in March 2018).

The lower pressure local authorities identified above make minimal use B&B accommodation, with no households at all in such accommodation at March 2018 (see figure 2). East Ayrshire and Dundee have not made any use of B&B for several years, whereas Perth and Kinross report occasionally doing so for specific reasons and short time periods, for instance, where the household presents late at night following a house fire or

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<sup>60</sup> Only some hostel provision providing higher levels of support and care are subject to inspection by the Care Quality Commission. See [https://www.cqc.org.uk/sites/default/files/20150209%20100521%20v5%200%20Quick%20reference%20guide%20To%20Regulated%20Activities%20by%20Service%20Type\\_FOR%20PUBLICATION%20%282%29.pdf](https://www.cqc.org.uk/sites/default/files/20150209%20100521%20v5%200%20Quick%20reference%20guide%20To%20Regulated%20Activities%20by%20Service%20Type_FOR%20PUBLICATION%20%282%29.pdf)

where the local authority need a short period of time to find TA for the household in their preferred location.

Nationally, the majority of households accommodated in B&B do not include children<sup>61</sup>. The three regular B&B using authorities involved in this study do, however, use B&B to some extent for this group. During 2017/18, around 130 households including children exited B&B accommodation in Edinburgh, with lower but still significant numbers in Glasgow (60) and lower numbers still in East Lothian (15) (see table 6).

*Table 6: Households with children exiting B&B TA during 2017-2018*

	<b>Number</b>
Edinburgh	130
Glasgow	60
East Lothian	15

Source: HL3 dataset 2017-2018

Note: Figures rounded to 5 cases in accordance with disclosure procedures for HL3.

The Unsuitable Accommodation Order<sup>62</sup> specifies that local authorities can only use 'unsuitable accommodation' such as B&Bs for families for up to 7 days, except in exceptional circumstances. East Lothian recorded no breaches of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order during 2017/18, with Glasgow reporting ten breaches. Edinburgh recorded 280 breaches of the order during 2017/18 and 20 breaches at March 2018 indicating substantial difficulties in the city moving families through B&B accommodation and into more suitable TA swiftly.

Local authorities making extensive and regular use of B&Bs (Edinburgh, Glasgow and East Lothian) rely on a combination of 'on contract' B&B accommodation and 'spot purchased' or 'off contract' rooms purchased on a night-by-night basis. Council staff report a preference for 'on contract' provision on the basis of cost and because on contract provision can be more effectively linked to support agencies. Though the guidance on monitoring TA use defines B&B accommodation as "small lodging establishment[s]... Typically... private homes or family homes offering accommodation with fewer than 10 bedrooms available for commercial use"<sup>63</sup>, it is clear that in reality provision can differ from this description significantly. First, B&Bs much larger, more institutional and less home-like than this description appear to be in use; and second, local authorities report using mainstream hotel chains, not just B&B type establishments, albeit in rarely and mainly in emergencies. In Perth and Kinross, where B&B is used rarely (see above), the local authority book standard hotels online using a credit card in response to previous feedback from households that they get 'treated differently' when hotel staff are aware that the council has booked the room.

Voluntary sector stakeholders reported negative views to B&B accommodation, echoing the views of recent consultation and research exercises in this area undertaken by Crisis and the Glasgow Homelessness Network<sup>64</sup>. The following quotations illustrate the primary

<sup>61</sup> Nationally, 73% of those entering B&B in 2017/18 were single, couples or 'other' household types not including children. See table 27 available at: <https://beta.gov.scot/publications/homelessness-scotland-2017-18/pages/8/>

<sup>62</sup> *The Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2014*.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2014/243/made>

<sup>63</sup> p. 5 in <https://www.gov.scot/Resource/0047/00474869.pdf>

<sup>64</sup> Glasgow Homelessness Network (2018) *Can We Fix Homelessness in Scotland? Aye We Can*. Glasgow: Glasgow Homelessness Network. <http://www.ghn.org.uk/shien/wp->



concerns, relating to the physical standards within B&Bs, the lack of support, rules and regulations (e.g. curfews) and the 'social environment' in B&Bs (i.e. that high numbers of people with support needs, addiction issues and in crisis can be accommodated together):

"[B&Bs] are almost universally hated by everybody that I have ever spoken to who's been through homelessness. There is zero support in any of the bed and breakfast accommodation... The conditions... are always reported to be unsanitary and just not very nice places to be, a poor state of repair, very difficult to get hold of staff to actually do anything... Lots of people feel very unsafe in them" (Glasgow, non-statutory)

"the quality of them [B&Bs] I've got to say is questionable at times. I mean, we've got several stories from young people over the years about being terrified in their room that doesn't have a locked door and there's older drug-using, alcohol-using, aggressive - can you imagine a 40-year-old man who uses alcohol or drugs and a 16-year-old being placed in the same facility and using the same stairs and the same bathroom? That's scary... That still happens... There are better quality ones... but that seems to have moved towards being, feeling unsafe for young people as well. I've had a few stories lately from there that they felt unsafe and that was a bit alarming for me in this instance, because that was one of the ones that we felt was a better one." (East Lothian, non-statutory)

"all the people that come to us and tell us that the bed and breakfast accommodation is poor security, dirty, whatever it may be... There's obviously many, many people in B&B that we don't hear from. So either they're very silent on it or... there's not a problem. [But] I couldn't tell you any good news stories... Anything that does come to us does tends to be around poor quality" (Edinburgh, non-statutory)

While the Edinburgh and Glasgow local informants quoted above specifically cite physical standards as an issue in B&Bs, the East Lothian participant specified that his concerns were "more about the people that might be staying there" i.e. about the social environment, and goes on to say that he had "not heard anybody really say too much about the quality of the rooms" (East Lothian, non-statutory).

Local authority participants were clear that use of B&B as a form of TA was a 'last resort' and a course of action over which they have little choice in the context of constrained accommodation options and limited resources. It is seen as a necessary component of provision to ensure that families aren't split up and people are not forced to sleep rough:

"bed and breakfast is not accommodation that we would like to offer people but we have to do it if somebody's saying that they've got no roof over their head... [it] is a fall-back position... to make sure that we're meeting every need to provide a roof over their head... we'll have to continue to do that until there's a change in resources that are given to us" (East Lothian, statutory)

"if we had alternatives to unsuitable accommodation we would use them. The fact is that often putting someone in unsuitable accommodation is the difference between a family being split up and going round their friend's or into different accommodation, or some people sleeping rough... It's almost like these campaigning organisations think that we sit there and think, oh good, good, good, we can put another family [in unsuitable accommodation]..." (Edinburgh, statutory)

“Although it's frowned upon, bed and breakfast, using that, I'd rather put somebody in a bed than left them homeless overnight.” (Edinburgh, statutory)

In East Lothian, statutory and voluntary sector key informants noted that it can be hard to move young people on from B&B into what professionals deem to be ‘better’ provision, either because of the location (nearer to people’s social networks) and/or because of the freedom from a support regime and associated rules and restrictions:

“for some young people, being in those B&Bs is almost a better option. We've had that as well as even if it has been a place which we would deem as not suitable for a young person to be accommodated in, at least they don't have any rules to stick too hard to, there isn't any structure... They're left to their own devices, so they don't have to do the things that we're asking young people to do, and that's about buying into a plan that will support and help them to maintain a tenancy.”(East Lothian, statutory)

“If they're placed in a B&B and it's in a B&B perhaps in the town where they come from, it can be quite difficult getting everyone to agree to move on to supported accommodation because, 'No, I'm happy where I am'.” (East Lothian, statutory)

Local authorities were well aware of concerns about the quality of B&B accommodation, and in particular accepted the unsuitability of B&B for families and the challenges associated with concentrating individuals in crisis together in the same unit. Edinburgh participants were particularly acutely aware of these issues given their high use of B&Bs and the attendant scrutiny they receive in this area. In the view of local authority staff, the key issues with B&Bs are the social environment and their unsuitability for families, rather than their physical standards, as per the findings of a series of focus groups undertaken by the council in 2017/18<sup>65</sup>:

“Obviously there's issues round some of the problems there because most of the people going through... B&Bs tend to be single with support needs. But the physical standards are nowhere near what people imagine... The two places that I've got concerns about, we tend to use quite high-end support cases. There is a lot of wear and tear so we have to be on top of the providers, but the particular provider is very responsive... There's a lot of very unhappy individuals who are in very poor circumstances, perhaps mental health or addiction. They don't want to be in a B&B” (Edinburgh, statutory)

“We've had to put families in bed and breakfast and the problem with that is they were never set up for that... A lot of the complaints there isn't actually to do with the standard of the bed and breakfast; it's more to do with that they're in a bed and breakfast and they've got children and don't have cooking facilities and all the rest.” (Edinburgh, statutory)

Statutory local informants in Edinburgh went to pains to describe the lengths they go to trying to maintain standards and address issues in B&B accommodation in the city, albeit that given the pressure on TA their ability to sanction B&B providers by removing the contract was difficult to use:

“every complaint for bed and breakfast is investigated. Someone will go out either on the day we get the complaint or the next day, so they're dealt with fairly quickly... we're really strict on our monitoring. If shared houses/B&B aren't up to the physical standard

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<sup>65</sup> Housing and Economy Committee (2018) *Homelessness Task Force – Actions, Recommendations and Outcomes*. Paper for City of Edinburgh Council's Housing and Economy Committee, Item 7.7, 7th June 2018. [http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/4413/housing\\_and\\_economy\\_committee](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/4413/housing_and_economy_committee)



we want, then we give them time to rectify. If they don't and there's no good reason, then we would make quite a serious discussion around; do we stop that contract? We have in the past. There's the other issues that if we said to a provider, say, of 20 beds, 'Right, we've got to stop using you', we've got to go and find 20 more beds. So they're very, very well managed... I would stay in all of them bar two." (Edinburgh, statutory)

"we do the checks, we do one unannounced early morning visit and then two unannounced night visits to all our properties just to see how they are outside the normal times we're expected to go down to make sure it's staffed" (Edinburgh, statutory)

Local authority staff in Edinburgh were also clear that people staying in B&Bs were not required to leave during the day if they did not want to, but did note that curfews were in place as a means to address concerns reportedly driven by elected local politicians around anti-social behaviour, albeit with some flexibility in how these were implemented for e.g. those in employment during night-time hours:

"curfews, they're in place... that's elected members who wanted that as a way to control what they perceived as anti-social behaviour... although it's a curfew there's a bit of flexibility in there as well. If somebody's working there's a bit of flexibility" (Edinburgh, statutory)

Addressing B&B use in Edinburgh has been a major focus of activity following the creation of the Homelessness Task Force in late 2017, which was tasked to "investigate the growing homelessness problem in the city... review the use of bed and breakfast premises and explore alternatives that better meet the needs of individuals and families, with an aim to end the use of bed and breakfast facilities"<sup>66</sup> (see also chapter 7). A key outcome of this work was the re-commissioning and conversion during the spring/summer of 2018 (at the time of fieldwork) of traditional B&B accommodation to newly specified 'Shared Housing'. A statutory sector key informant described the differences between the models:

"B&B would be exactly as the traditional model would be. There would be essentially a room, you would get yourself a room, sometimes en suite, sometimes not. You'd have no food storage facility so no fridge. You would have nowhere to store food. There's nowhere independently to cook food other than some of the properties allow people to get access on a very limited basis to a microwave. There are no laundry facilities. So in terms of people's dignity and wellbeing, all shared houses will now have access to appropriate laundry facilities. So it won't just be one washing machine and it won't just be one fridge. Everybody will have a fridge in the room. There will be no... real restriction on when people can access the kitchens to cook... they have to be open for something like 16 hours a day or 14 hours a day or something like that... There were other things that we asked that they do in terms of this contract as well. So for example they must have a strong Wi-Fi signal right through the buildings which was never there before." (Edinburgh, statutory)

The Homelessness Task Force's June report further specified that support will be available and 'actively promoted' in all new Shared Housing provision<sup>67</sup>. Voluntary sector local informants shared a concern that while welcome, these changes do not address the

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<sup>66</sup> p.1 in Housing and Economy Committee (2018) *Homelessness Task Force – Update*. Paper for the Housing and Economy Committee, Item 7.9, 18<sup>th</sup> January 2018.

[http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/4305/housing\\_and\\_economy\\_committee](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/4305/housing_and_economy_committee)

<sup>67</sup> p. 6 in Housing and Economy Committee (2018) *Homelessness Task Force – Actions, Recommendations and Outcomes*. Paper for City of Edinburgh Council's Housing and Economy Committee, Item 7.7, 7<sup>th</sup> June 2018.

[http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/4413/housing\\_and\\_economy\\_committee](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/4413/housing_and_economy_committee)

fundamental issues in Edinburgh. One participant was clear that the facilities upgrade, while positive, is of secondary importance to the key issue of support provision within such accommodation, and that they had not yet seen improvements in this area:

“This year a lot of [B&Bs] them have been converted into lodgings that have a kitchen but they're the same building, there's nothing changed other than the person has access to a microwave and a toaster. There's a risk that that could be seen as being solved in Edinburgh, where in actual fact the issue predominantly is there's no support in those units... there's an abandonment that takes place so that the person is put into a bed and that's it, they've got their bed now. In theory the floating support teams are being encouraged to go in more and more, and that could happen, but in practice... There's a lot... that hasn't happened yet... nothing's hit the ground.” (Edinburgh, non-statutory)

Another voluntary sector key informant, while strongly supportive of the upgrade, was critical about what they perceived to be a lack systemic and long-term proposals to address B&B use in Edinburgh:

“any upgrade, it can only be better in the B&B. I think what it avoids is a fundamental issue of there not being enough properties in the first place... I think there needs to be some sort of plan around, well if there's 600 people in B&B and if there's x number of people coming in every week, how are you going to meet that?... what's required is that systemic review to say, 'Right, okay, from this point to this point how many do we have? How many are coming? What's the challenges and what do we actually need in that commitment being made?' Rather than saying B&B, well, you know, we need to stop and we need to put in a few washing machines.” (Edinburgh, non-statutory)

These complaints were matched however with acute frustrations on the part of local authority staff who acknowledged the problems with B&B provision (see above), but saw other organisations in the sector criticising them but offering no “costed alternative” and doing “absolutely nothing... practical to help us reduce the number of families in bed and breakfast” (Edinburgh, statutory). Moreover, statutory informants were clear that the “aggressive” “industry” of several third sector advocacy organisations of writing letters to the local authority when the Unsuitable Accommodation Order is breached is, from their perspective, counterproductive:

“What you're actually doing, you're flagging that somebody's in temporary accommodation which [we] know. You're flagging that they've been in there for eight days which [we] know and you're diverting officers time to writing responses to you for a situation you're not going to resolve that day and actually is incredibly unhelpful.... there's a real aggression I would suggest... in the last six months to a year... [and] it's incredibly unhelpful” (Edinburgh, statutory)

While the Edinburgh case makes very clear the challenges and concerns associated with heavy reliance on B&B, Dundee offers a contrasting example of a local authority committed to not using B&B, something which one statutory sector key informant explained they were “very proud of... but it isn't without its challenges for people at the sharp-end.” (Dundee, statutory). They explained:

“about ten years ago we had something like 90-odd single persons and families booked into bed and breakfast... it was costing a fortune... Long story short, we were given a remit about five, six, seven years ago, ‘do not use bed and breakfasts or hotels under any circumstances’... It's easier said than done. What we did is we opened up another hostel... now [recently] we have flirted with the possibility of having to use a hotel -

mainly for families - because the single persons we usually manage to work something out" (Dundee, statutory)

The key informant later elaborated on the "nightmare" they face finding TA for families in crisis:

"families I can't stress enough... if you're dealing with crisis and somebody walks through the door, kids in tow it's like... you're saying we can use two or three of [your] friends/family, even if you split the kids up and de de de... but that's been voted on at the highest circles and... we have to find another solution which is often easier said than done... we'll maybe book a family of five into... we say, 'Look we can give you [a] one bed [property] even for three days and then move you into an actual flat.'" (Dundee, statutory)

In East Ayrshire by contrast, where homelessness and TA pressure is considerably lower than in the other case study areas and they seem to have a relatively 'elastic' supply of social sector TA, B&B has not been used for some time and without any resulting pressures in accommodating applicants:

"We used bed and breakfast many years ago but we haven't used it for some years... The bed and breakfasts that we had at the time, they were [often far away from settlements and]... to manage them it was just, it wasn't really very good... for the service user it certainly wasn't good because they weren't getting the support that we can give if they're local for us." (East Ayrshire, statutory)

## Support

One of the key contributions of the recent Housing First international paradigm shift<sup>68</sup>, and the UK Supporting People programme before that, is to embed the notion that the support and accommodation elements of homelessness interventions should be separated wherever possible. This enables the support element to move with the person, rather than be tied to residence in a particular place, and to be flexible as people's needs change. Equally, it should mean that people are not obliged to accept support that they don't require simply to live in accommodation that otherwise meets their needs.

The previous three sections suggest that this transition towards 'delinking' support and accommodation is far from complete in Scottish TA provision. The level of support available to an individual is still to a considerable degree dependent on the nature of TA they are placed in. While there are significant variations between case study areas, the following patterns are evident:

- **Hostel based TA gives residents access to the most support**, with a staff presence generally 24/7. The level and nature of support, and the extent to which teams choose or are able to link in specialist (e.g. addiction) services varies considerably, with larger hostels tending to be more 'generic' and smaller units often targeting specific groups and offering more tailored and specialist support. A small number of hostels involve very low/no levels of support (sometimes described as supervised rather supported accommodation). Local authorities often struggle to match individuals to hostels with the appropriate level/nature of support given their needs;
- **B&B accommodation tends to offer no or low support**, although some local authorities (notably Edinburgh) have **recently sought to improve the support offer to**

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<sup>68</sup> Tsemberis, S., Gulcur, L. and Nakae, M. (2004) *Housing First, consumer choice, and harm reduction for homeless individuals with a dual diagnosis*. American Journal of Public Health, 94(4): pp 651-655

**those in B&B** (or Shared Housing as per Edinburgh's remodelling of B&B accommodation);

- Local authorities offer either **in-house and fairly light tough support to those in social sector TA or floating support provided by an external specialist agency**. While **many in social sector TA have low/no support needs**, there is a concern that **others lack access to the support they may need**.

Mismatches between the needs of those in TA and the support available to them therefore appear to be common across the case study areas – and particularly consequential where households remain in TA for long periods (see chapter 5), with some households lacking access to the help they need and some accommodated in (and subject to high rent charges for) supported accommodation when they do not need that support.

We are now able to draw on new provisional local authority estimates from five of our case study areas on the support needs of those in TA relative to the support available in local TA provision. This data was collated using the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan excel tool and is reported here anonymously given its highly provisional nature (see chapter 2). One local authority was unable to submit this data in time, with another only able to provide estimates on the profile of its TA stock, not on TA residents support needs.

The excel tool asks local authorities to estimate (based on HL1 data and/or their own service management data) the support needs of those in TA using the following categorisation:

- *No/low support needs*: the household/individual will easily move into mainstream, settled housing with no need for specific support other than sign-posting and low level housing management support provided by housing providers/concierge-based services;
- *Medium support needs*: the household/individual requires visiting housing support, or multi-professional wrap-around support to enable them to live independently in mainstream housing. May include concierge in addition to visiting housing support and other professional support services;
- *Severe and multiple deprivation/Complex needs*: the household/individual would benefit from intensive wrap-around support and a Housing First approach to re-housing;
- *Residential/Supported accommodation*: independent living within the community is not possible or preferable (e.g. for reasons of safety, risk to self or others, choice) and shared and supported accommodation is the preferred housing option.

Grouping service users in this way is intended to enable local authorities to consider what types of provision is needed, with what levels of support.

Table 7 displays local authority estimates of their TA residents' support needs for the current and next year. It suggests that the majority of TA residents (62-75%) have no or low support needs. The next biggest group have medium support needs (13-25%), with 3-10% estimated to have complex needs and be suitable for a Housing First response. The remaining and very small group (1-2%) of TA residents are estimated to need access to residential supported accommodation. Note that LA4 was only able to provide a two-way categorisation of TA residents as having either low/no support needs or 'higher' support needs. In general, authorities forecast stability in this needs profile over the next year, though one area expect the proportion of those in TA with complex needs to reduce from 10 to 6% due to increased planned provision for rapid rehousing.

The Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan excel tool also asks local authorities to profile current TA provision in their area according to the support available within it. The anonymised estimates from our case study areas are presented in table 8. If the estimates and

categorisations provided by LAs at this early stage are accurate, comparing table 7 and 8 strongly reinforces our qualitative finding that there is a mismatch between the support available in current TA and TA residents support needs. Different LAs face distinct challenges. In some, households in TA are at high risk of living in ‘over-supported’ TA and in others, households are at high risk of lacking sufficient support while they’re in TA.

*Table 7: Estimated profile of support needs - TA occupants (current and projected for the next year)*

	LA1		LA2		LA3		LA4	
	Current	Future	Current	Future	Current	Future	Current	Future
No/low support	75%	79%	62%	62%	70%	70%	62%	62%
Medium support	13%	13%	27%	27%	25%	25%	38%	38%
Severe and Multiple Deprivation/complex needs	10%	6%	10%	9%	3%	3%		
Residential/supported accommodation	2%	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%		
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans – Interim data (4 case studies providing information)

LA1 estimates an under-provision of no/low support accommodation (34% of current provision, but 75% of current needs profile) and a radical over provision of high support TA (56% of provision, but only 10% of needs), meaning that many households are likely to be in TA with more support than they need.

*Table 8: Profile of TA provision*

Profile of TA - type of support	LA1	LA2	LA3	LA4	LA5
None/low - no support or low housing management based	24%	66%	1%	0%	78%
Low - less than 24-hour, low level concierge/accommodation based support	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Low - 24 hour low level concierge/accommodation based support	8%	24%	43%	0%	0%
Medium - low level concierge plus visiting housing support	7%	0%	0%	0%	22%
Medium - visiting individual housing support, or other professional support	5%	1%	0%	78%	0%
High - intense wrap-around support for individuals	56%	6%	5%	0%	0%
Residential support	1%	3%	51%	22%	0%
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans – Interim data (5 case studies provided information)

LA2 by contrast estimates a radical over-provision of no/low support TA (90% of current provision, but 62% of needs), substantial under-provision of medium support TA (1% of current provision but 27% of needs), under-provision of high needs TA (6% of provision but 10% of needs) and over-provision of residential TA (3% of provision, 1% of needs), meaning that many households are in accommodation with insufficient support, and a smaller group are in residential supported accommodation when they don't need to be.

Similar to LA1, LA3 estimates significant under-provision of no/low support TA (44% of provision compared to 70% of needs) and medium support TA (0% of provision but 25% of needs), alongside radical overprovision of residential supported accommodation (51% of provision and 2% of needs), indicating that a high proportion of those in TA are in more highly supported environments than they require, and exposed to the downsides of congregate accommodation provision described above.

Partial data from LA4 indicates an over-provision of medium-support TA relative to need. While 62% of current TA occupants are thought to have low or no support needs, no TA provision is available with this level of support provision, suggesting that a high proportion of households will be in TA with more support than they need. The match between higher level support needs and more supported TA is not clear in LA4 given the incomplete data return.

It should be noted that this 'static' picture of TA provision and TA resident support needs doesn't adequately account for the flow of households through TA. For instance, it may be that a local authority able to achieve minimal lengths of stay in TA can justify a less close fit between the nature of TA provision and TA residents needs, focusing resources instead on securing households rapid access to *settled* housing with appropriate supports.

It should also be noted that the qualitative case study data presented above would raise some concerns about the variable quality of the some of the supported TA currently being provided in Scottish local authorities. Even in areas where the 'match' between TA residents' needs and TA provision is good 'on paper', issues regarding the quality and nature of that provision (e.g. the availability of specialist addiction and mental health support) may still need to be addressed.

Some voluntary sector TA providers also commented on the tighter commissioning practices and reducing budgets available for providing the support element of their provision, reporting that the local authority in question would "happily have [the supported accommodation hostel] here with a few wardens and as long as people are moving through it, that would suit them". This may of course reflect local authority analysis of the support needs of those in the relevant TA units, with the data presented in this section showing that in some LAs there is major overprovision of supported forms of TA. Support in congregate TA may still be needed, of course, to manage the challenges of congregate living environments, even if most of those residing in it have low support needs.

## **Costs**

This study's interim report presented Scotland's Housing Network benchmarking information showing the average weekly costs of various types of TA from its members. This gave an indication based on data from only a subset of local authorities of the level of TA related costs and trends in these costs over time. The analysis suggested that there had been reductions in the costs of various kinds of TA over the last few years, albeit from a high baseline in many cases. The most significant reductions were seen in the average weekly cost of B&B, with substantial reductions also seen in the costs of local authority and housing association run hostels. The average costs of social sector TA (both local authority and housing association) were also shown to have reduced in the last year. Key informant perspectives considered in the interim report suggested that these reductions reflect efforts to address constrained (and often reducing) local authority budgets and manage subsidy constraints associated with Westminster-led welfare reform.

The Housing Network's data was also used to explore variations in the average social sector TA rent across 22 (anonymised) Scottish local authorities for whom data was available. This analysis showed the extreme variations in the rent charged for social sector TA, from well below the Local Housing Allowance rate for a 2-bedroomed property in one area, to more than three times that level in the most expensive LA area. In over half of the 22 areas for which data was available, the average social sector TA rent was at least 50% higher than the Local Housing Allowance rate for a 2-bedroomed property in that area.

The overall story so far on TA costs is therefore that despite reductions in recent years, the costs of TA remain very high in many areas, with an extreme degree of variation in TA costs raising concerns about affordability for those in work, work disincentive effects for those not in work, and equity and fairness concerns about TA residents in areas with higher TA rent levels.

The Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan excel tool enables local authorities to record their expenditure on TA, with the following four categories of TA separated<sup>69</sup>:

- *Temporary furnished flats*: self-contained accommodation based in the community used as temporary homeless accommodation;
- *Emergency*: accommodation provided at the first point of contact of the homeless household with the local authority (if accommodation is needed);
- *Interim*: accommodation provided under the Homeless Persons (Provision of Non-permanent Accommodation) (Scotland) Regulations 2010. (Under these regulations local authorities may provide an applicant with accommodation that isn't permanent/settled, where that applicant is assessed as having housing support needs meaning that such accommodation is inappropriate. In these cases, a support plan is required, and the applicants' circumstances later reviewed according to an agreed timeline to assess their current needs and consider whether settled accommodation is appropriate.);
- *Other*: anything else not included in the above categories used as temporary homeless accommodation.

Information collected on current *average* costs and the *range* of costs is presented below for the five case study areas that provided relevant data.

*Table 9: Average weekly charge including all rent and service charges*

Type	Mean	Median	Minimum	Maximum
TFF	£ 318.94	£ 345.97	£ 65.00	£ 494.38
Other	£ 314.43	£ 215.00	£ 69.59	£ 950.07
Emergency	£ 284.54	£ 256.48	£ 123.18	£ 1,370.00
Interim	£ 188.74	£ 154.04	£ 40.00	£ 368.23
Total	£ 266.77	£ 224.95	£ 40.00	£ 1,370.00

Source: Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans – Interim data (5 case studies provided data)

The average weekly charge for TA across the case study local authorities was £266.77, while the median (the rent at which 50% of rents were above and 50% below) was £224.95 suggesting that the average is skewed by some very large costs.

TFF provision is most expensive on average with a mean weekly charge of £318.94 and a median weekly charge of £345.97 due to some very high rental costs, the highest being £494.38 per week. This is particularly concerning in light of the fact that TFFs (usually social sector TA) are the most commonly used kind of TA across Scotland (see figure 2). They are also the dominant form of TA provision in three of our six case study areas, and a form of TA in which households tend to spend longer periods (see chapter 5). Though the average weekly charge for TFFs is significantly higher than for other kinds of TA, the charges for this kind of accommodation vary radically across the case study areas, with the lowest in our sample standing at just £65.00 per week, a mere 13% of the highest rent charged (£494.38) and around a fifth of the median rent charged (£345.97).

<sup>69</sup> These definitions are taken from Indigo Housing (2018) *Scotland's transition to rapid rehousing: Rapid rehousing transition Plans – Guidance for local authorities and partners*. Edinburgh: Social Bite.



This radical difference in weekly charges for TFF accommodation is particularly noteworthy given that we can expect the TFF 'offer' (furnished dispersed accommodation) to be relatively consistent across LA areas. In other words, these figures appear to suggest that TA residents in the same kinds of TA are facing *vastly* different rent levels, reinforcing concerns regarding fairness in TA charging across local authority areas raised in this study's interim report. *Some* of this variation might be explained by the higher cost of housing association (as opposed to local authority) social sector TA described by some local informants who participated in this study, and that more expensive private sector leased accommodation might be included in this category by some LA areas given the definition above. But the data submitted makes clear that we see these radically different weekly charges *within* ordinary local authority accommodation used as TA. The much more significant explanation then is the very different methods of calculating weekly charges for this kind of TA documented in this study's interim report and work by Anna Evans on the funding of homelessness services in Scotland, ranging from matching mainstream social sector rents to 'full cost recovery'<sup>70</sup>. The very different approaches are illustrated by these contrasting (anonymised) quotes from two case study local informants:

"the funding's an issue for temporary accommodation, we have corporately taken the pressure for temporary accommodation so there's no service charge [attached to TFFs]... we just have a mainstream rent so we're still being able to supply a really high standard but it's met through our corporate [General Fund] and that's what's been agreed here"

"I do think that the [TFF charges] are high... that charge is based on a kind of formula calculation to encompass a lot of other charges, and a lot of other costs. So I don't know if there's scope to decrease it... if we were to lower the rents, then how would that impact on us being able to provide the accommodation, the furnishing; to be able to afford to do the repairs as people go in and leave; to be able to provide the support? That whole cost. The utilities as well..."

The other categories of TA also show radically diverging minimum and maximum weekly charges. In these cases, the divergence is likely to reflect in significant part the very different kinds of accommodation (with different ownership, staffing structures and levels/kinds of support) included in these broad categories. One local informant noted that local authority run hostels have weekly charges comparable to mainstream social rents, but that voluntary sector provided hostel accommodation is extremely expensive. Though these large differences may reflect different 'offers' in the relevant TA (e.g. support provision) or whether support costs are included in the weekly charge or funded separately, we cannot rule out large differences in weekly charging for similar kinds of accommodation (and support) across case study areas.

On average, interim accommodation appears to carry the lowest weekly charge across our case study areas, which is somewhat counterintuitive given that the relevant regulations would suggest those in this form of TA require some level of support (unlike many in TA, see above). This may be because some of the recorded weekly charges include support costs, while others do not or because similar kinds of interim accommodation within and across LAs are subject to very different charging practices. According to the preliminary data provided to us in the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan excel tool, interim (or 'non-permanent') accommodation capacity appears to be very uneven across the case study

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<sup>70</sup> Evans, A. (2016) *Funding Homelessness Services in Scotland*. Edinburgh: Shelter.  
[https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/professional\\_resources/policy\\_library/policy\\_library\\_folder/funding\\_homelessness\\_services\\_in\\_scotland](https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/professional_resources/policy_library/policy_library_folder/funding_homelessness_services_in_scotland).



areas, with three of the five areas returning relevant data reporting no such 'interim' TA at all. The remaining two areas, however, report high interim TA capacity (17% of overall capacity in one case and 31% in another), suggesting frequent use of these regulations. This is broadly in line with qualitative testimony from local informants, some of whom reported using interim accommodation for a significant subset of the homeless population (2-300 in one urban case study area) and some of whom were entirely unfamiliar with the regulations. It may also be, however, that interim accommodation use is not yet being accurately reported via the excel tool.

A key concern identified in the interim report for this study concerns the work disincentive effects associated with the often high costs of TA. The case studies offered an opportunity to explore this issue further. Local informants overwhelmingly agreed that that staying in TA has strong work-disincentive effects. These two participants focused on the impact of rents that apply in social sector TA:

"[social sector TA] rent is significantly higher than an unfurnished [mainstream social housing] rent and... if somebody's looking to get into employment or move on and isn't getting a permanent let, you've got that potential issue where they're trapped there because they can't make the move because their rent is too expensive... we need to be looking at different solutions there" (Glasgow, non-statutory)

"of all the things that annoy me... it's not just in Dundee.. [is that we've] charged the highest rents to the most vulnerable people.... That is, to me it always has been, appalling. It's a social embarrassment because since the legislation was brought in we have financed temporary accommodation through Housing Benefit... it's got to stop... Five years ago 80 to 90 per cent of our client group were unemployed and on full Housing Benefit... but the socio-economic group we're dealing with... has changed drastically and maybe almost 30/40 per cent of those clients are either employed or partly employed.... it's just got to go to just charging the Local Housing Allowance... obviously that's millions of less money rolling into Dundee City Council so Scottish Government have got to find another way to fund [it]" (Dundee, statutory)

A voluntary sector participant in Glasgow illustrated the point with a specific example of young man in social sector TA:

"he lives in his own flat, a TFF, he's been there for two years. He can't work, can't go to college because of that, because of the rent. But his social worker isn't in any hurry to move him on. This young man has been tenancy-ready since he was 16...he knows how to look after his house, he knows how to keep his door and manage his door and keep himself safe and secure... He knows how to budget his money, so all of these markers but there's no hurry to move him on, although if you speak to him, he's demented because he does things cash-in-hand, he works in car washes and such like just to try and get a bit of extra money... really smart young guy, loads of potential and it's just sitting there because he can't move on into his own accommodation. We're limiting people's life chances." (Glasgow, non-statutory)

These local informants involved in the provision of supported hostel accommodation make clear that the issue is also acute for residents of this form of TA. Though two of these local informants make the point that some hostel residents are not 'work ready' it is clear that this is not always the case. This is reinforced by the support-related data presented above, which suggests that in some areas a high proportion of those in hostel TA are likely to have no or low support needs (and thus are likely to be 'work ready'):

“If somebody comes in and says they've got a job, the first thing we say is, 'Get out', in a sense, because it [being in TA] certainly is a disincentive, because, the support would still be getting paid, but, say, £100-odd, £120, or something, for rent here... so, it is very much a disincentive. But, I would say... The numbers are so low... the people, especially in [direct access hostel], are so work-unready... It's not a massive theme.” (Dundee, non-statutory)

“We would not be able to support them, the costs would escalate and it would be cheaper for them to go out and stay in a hotel basically, well not quite, that's an exaggeration but whenever they go into work... It changes the situation entirely and, you know, it's no longer viable... [but] they [people in high support supported accommodation] are not people... [that] would be work ready for a long, long time, if at all.... it was always a concern up in the [other] hostel, because we had a more transient group of people coming in. You'd maybe have someone coming in who was actively looking for work but didn't have accommodation at that time and we'd have to tell them that in the event that they manage to get a job, that Housing Benefit comes down and their requirement to pay goes up. So it wouldn't have been worth their while.” (Perth and Kinross, non-statutory)

“there used to be this blanket... 'It's not worth your while working while you're in temporary accommodation'. I personally don't agree with that at all... if you go to any private let you'd end up paying the same percentage of your wage... [but those in work are] paying out a bunch of their wage [on TA rent], they're only left with an extra tenner on top of what the person next door to them has got left over a week and they're very aware of that. That can be frustrating for people.” (Edinburgh, non-statutory)

There was some evidence that local authorities employ discretion where TA residents are in work, agreeing that they pay a lower rent than the standard weekly charge:

“if people were working, what we agreed was, it's what you can afford.” (Perth and Kinross, statutory)

“Anybody that's working, what we're normally trying to do is ask them to pay something at least towards that [the TA rent] off their wages” (East Ayrshire, statutory)

East Ayrshire local informants went on to explain however that this discretion is limited in that they “couldn't charge people that are working one rent and those who are in receipt of benefits another rent” (East Ayrshire, statutory) and because people in this situation continue to accrue arrears, even if their lower payment has been agreed with the local authority.

The opportunity for discretion on rents appears to be more constrained in supported hostel TA, as these two local informants explain, albeit that in one case the service in question seeks to support individuals seeking or in work in other ways:

“We try to help out and I know other places do try to do similar sorts of things... we'll buy them a monthly bus pass for example... because we can't legally reduce their rent but we can do other stuff. We can help provide clothing for them to get into work, we can help fund travel, we can help with stuff like that” (Edinburgh, non-statutory)

“There is a work disincentive, definitely that is a problem, that is a massive issue... the more they earn, then the more rent contribution they need to pay... our rent here, it's high... but that's because it's tenancy support.... if a... person's working... [they have] to pay, and this is about the government, this is about thresholds and what they'll pay because that rent has to be paid... that's a disincentive” (East Lothian, non-statutory)

While the forms of discretion reported here may make a difference to TA residents' ability to maintain or access employment where they are available and where TA residents are aware of them, they remain localised and informal responses to the systemic issue of work disincentive effects associated with the high rents seen in much TA. Of course, these effects will not be present in areas and forms of TA where weekly charges are at the lower end of spectrum of charges shown in table 9.

## **Conclusion**

Local authorities tend to rely on a combination of social sector temporary furnished TA, hostels and in higher pressure areas, B&B accommodation, with each form associated with its advantages and challenges from the perspective of local stakeholders.

Where pressures on social housing are less acute, local authorities prefer to rely on local authority owned social rented accommodation for TFFs, for financial reasons and to retain greater control over TA, whereas in higher pressure areas or stock transfer authorities, housing association stock is also used as TFFs. LAs have less control over access to and the location of such stock and it can be more expensive. Social sector TA can be concentrated in particular blocks or neighbourhoods, which can limit choices, isolate those in TA from social networks and pose issues in relation to anti-social behaviour and housing management akin to those in congregate hostel accommodation. Single people are under-represented in social sector TA tenancies, particularly in the cities, sometimes reflecting demand pressures and sometimes an organisational ethos that sees TFFs as unsuitable for most single households, especially those with more complex needs or challenging behaviours. The availability of support for those in dispersed, social rented TA varies, and is delivered in different ways and there are conflicting views on whether the support available to TFF residents is adequate. While some local authorities have increased their portfolio of social rented TFFs recently, the balance between doing so and retaining social housing stock for settled housing is an ongoing dilemma, particularly in higher pressure areas.

Hostel accommodation forms a dominant component of TA in some local authorities, and plays some role in TA provision all of our case study areas. It provides congregate forms of accommodation within a building but beyond this broad definition, the range of sizes, types, facilities and levels of support available within hostels varies significantly between and within local authorities. Some of Scotland's cities retain large-scale hostels by modern standards, often mixed with smaller specialist units. Bearing this diversity in mind, there is nevertheless a strong consensus about the challenges posed by hostel provision, including mismatches between the support available and residents' needs and the multiple challenges associated with congregate accommodation (conflict and anti-social behaviour, substance misuse, institutionalisation, refusals, exclusions, under-occupancy/high voids). At worst, hostels are acting as 'negatively enabling' environments, fuelling addiction and exacerbating vulnerabilities. Rigid 'staircase' models of hostel provision, which can exacerbate some of these issues and have been subject to international critique, persist in some local authorities, though this is expected to change in the near future. In some authorities, there has been recent work to improve the support available to individuals with challenging behaviour struggling most to engage with these services. Despite these issues, local informants often felt hostels have a place in TA provision, particularly smaller, more specialist and higher quality units.

B&B accommodation is used commonly in some local areas, especially where TA pressures are high, and minimally or not at all in others. Local authorities report using this form of TA as a last resort, and insofar as possible for short periods. Though generally used

for single households, families with children accounted for over 200 households leaving TA during 2017-2018, mostly in Edinburgh. Voluntary sector concerns about B&B accommodation span issues of cleanliness, repair, safety, appropriateness and the availability of support, but local authority staff report that concerns about the physical standards of B&B are unjustified and overplayed, particularly in Edinburgh where concerted efforts have been made to monitor quality and upgrade such accommodation. While there was a strong consensus that B&B was never a desirable form of TA, examples were given of it suiting particular households, for instance because of its location and the relative absence of structured rules and supports compared to hostel accommodation. Moreover, local authority staff see as playing an important role to keep people off the street where no other options are available and to keep families together. The rigid commitment not to use B&Bs in some areas has had knock on effects in making emergency TA for families extremely difficult to find, leading to overcrowding in TFFs.

The level and nature of support available to those in TA continues to be linked to the form of accommodation households access. This is in tension with evidence-informed best practice to 'de-link' support and accommodation to maximise flexibility and enable the tailoring of support to people's specific needs. Hostels tend to give residents access to the most support, but in a context where the challenges of congregate living must also be negotiated. B&B accommodation tends to have least support, but some local authorities have sought to improve the support available to those residing in it. Support provided to those in TFFs varies and is delivered differently in different areas. While many in this type of accommodation have low or no support needs, others lack access to the support they need.

New and provisional estimates presented in this report suggest a radical mismatch between the level of support available in currently TA provision and estimated levels of need among TA residents in some local authorities. There are local authorities with vastly more medium and high support provision than their estimated TA tenant profile suggests they need and insufficient supply of low/no support needs TA. Other local authorities estimate an undersupply of higher support needs TA and over-supply of low/no support needs TA. These estimates indicate that current TA provision is not fit for purpose, reflecting legacies of provision rather than effective procurement of TA in relation to current demand.

Provisional data on the weekly rent for different forms of TA indicates that local authorities are deploying very different approaches to calculating weekly charges, with the range of TA charges running from £40 to £1,300 a week. This partly reflects that some of these charges include support costs, including specialist support provision for those with complex needs, whereas others will not. But counter-intuitively, the highest reported costs, on average, were for temporary furnished flats (TFF) and weekly charges for local authorities own housing stock are extremely high (£400 or more) in some areas, and as low as £65 a week in other areas. Some local authorities are achieving these lower rents by using the General Fund to fund the TA service, but this is clearly not generally the case, meaning that TA residents face a stark postcode lottery in their ability to access TA that is affordable, particularly for those in or seeking work. Some local authorities and TA providers seek to mitigate the strong work distinctive effects associated with high weekly charges through the use of discretion or in-kind assistance with e.g. travel costs, but these inevitably have only a very marginal effect on the systemic issues associated with high rents.

## 5. Homelessness prevention, lengths of stay in temporary accommodation, and rehousing outcomes

Minimising the use of TA was squarely on local authority agendas during this study's fieldwork period for a number of reasons. At the national level, the publication in the last year of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Actions Group's recommendations and new government requirements for local authorities to submit Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans have had an impact. Efforts to reduce TA use and lengths of stay have also been influenced by local transformation agendas, described in more detail in chapter 7. In this context, this chapter explores current local authority practice and outcomes in relation to the following three themes: homelessness prevention as a means of minimising the demand for TA, length of stay in and approaches to achieving 'flow' through TA, and housing outcomes for those in TA.

### Prevention

From 2009, Scottish local authorities began to implement the Housing Options approach to homelessness prevention, according to which households approaching councils with housing-related issues are provided with advice on their housing options. This move is understood to wholly account for the reduction in homeless applications seen in Scotland since that time, from 57,000 in 2009/10 to 35,000 in 2017/18<sup>71</sup>. Note that these reductions have not led to a fall in the numbers in TA nationally (see figure 2), reflecting increased lengths of stay in TA, the build up of a 'backlog' of cases linked to the abolition of the priority need category, and constrained move-on options in some local authorities<sup>72</sup>. Going forward however, sector experts see improved prevention playing a crucial role in easing TA pressure<sup>73</sup>.

Two factors are relevant to understand the implementation of Housing Options in Scotland before considering specific approaches in our case study areas. First, there have been concerns that there is a tension between Housing Options work and the requirements of Scottish homelessness legislation, with a 2014 regulator's report highlighting that in some local authorities staff were working to homelessness application reduction targets and that the diversion of individuals away from a homelessness assessment was not always appropriate<sup>74</sup>. In other words, there was a concern that some Housing Options activity amounted to 'gatekeeping' (preventing people accessing their entitlements under homelessness legislation). Second, however, comparisons with Housing Options practice in England have suggested that the Scottish breed of homelessness prevention is "relatively 'light touch'"<sup>75</sup>, with a high proportion of interventions involving the provision of information

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<sup>71</sup> See Table 1 available at: <https://beta.gov.scot/publications/homelessness-scotland-2017-18/> and Scottish Government (2018) *Homelessness in Scotland: 2017-18*. <https://beta.gov.scot/publications/homelessness-scotland-2017-18/>; Fitzpatrick, S., Pawson, H., Bramley, G., Wilcox, S. and Watts, B. (2016) *The homelessness monitor: Scotland 2015*. Crisis: London.

<sup>72</sup> Littlewood, M., Watts, B. and Blenkinsopp, J. (2018) *Temporary accommodation in Scotland: Interim Report*. Edinburgh: Social Bite; Fitzpatrick, S., Pawson, H., Bramley, G., Wilcox, S. and Watts, B. (2016) *The homelessness monitor: Scotland 2015*. Crisis: London.

<sup>73</sup> Littlewood, M., Watts, B. and Blenkinsopp, J. (2018) *Temporary accommodation in Scotland: Interim Report*. Edinburgh: Social Bite; Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (2018) *Ending Homelessness: The report on the final recommendations of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group*.

<https://beta.gov.scot/publications/homelessness-and-rough-sleeping-action-group-final-report/>

<sup>74</sup> Scottish Housing Regulator (2014) *Housing Options in Scotland: A thematic inquiry*.

<https://www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/publications/housing-options-scotland-thematic-inquiry>

<sup>75</sup> Fitzpatrick, S., Pawson, H., Bramley, G., Wilcox, S. and Watts, B. (2016) *The homelessness monitor: Scotland 2015*. Crisis: London.

and signposting<sup>76</sup>, rather than the more ‘activist’ approach seen south of the border, where for instance facilitating access to the private rented sector has been a key Housing Options intervention<sup>77</sup>. Key informants contributing to this study’s interim report described homelessness prevention practice in Scotland as ‘confused’ and ‘messy’, and the Action Group has made extensive recommendations on improvements to prevention work.

How local authorities currently deliver their Housing Options service varies substantially<sup>78</sup>, and while national statistics on these activities have been available since 2014 (Prevent1), they retain the status of ‘experimental statistics undergoing evaluation’. The relevant statistical release makes clear that because of different approaches, statistics on local authorities Housing Options services “are not directly comparable”<sup>79</sup>. The Prevent1 data used in this section should be interpreted with these caveats in mind.

Prevent1 data for 2017-2018 suggests that 1.6% of households made a Housing Option approach nationally. The plurality of prevention activities (38%) involved general housing or tenancy rights advice, with a further 27% of housing options activities consisting of informing clients of their rights under homelessness legislation (see table 10). The remaining 35% involved the provision of more substantive preventative interventions, like the financial advice and assistance, help to move property, negotiations with landlords, referral to health/social work or employment services, help to remain in accommodation and tenancy/social care support/property adaptations.

*Table 10: Prevention activities by LA*

Prevention activities	Scotland	East Ayrshire	East Lothian	Glasgow City	Perth & Kinross	Dundee City	Edinburgh
General Housing advice/ Tenancy rights advice	38%	19%	26%	40%	53%	46%	62%
Client informed of rights under homelessness legislation	27%	15%	16%	36%	28%	43%	30%
Other	35%	66%	58%	24%	18%	11%	7%

Source: Housing Options (Prevent1) statistics 2017-2018

Notes: The ‘other’ category includes such as financial advice and assistance, help to move property, negotiations with landlords, referral to health/social work or employment services, help to remain in accommodation and tenancy/social care support/property adaptations.

By far the most common reported outcome of Housing Options approaches nationally is households making an application under homelessness legislation (45%), with around a fifth remaining in their current accommodation and further fifth (19%) losing contact with Housing Options services (see figure 4). It is not clear in either of these cases the extent to which these outcomes were positive or not (on the one hand, the accommodation they remained in may not be suitable, and on the other, households may have lost contact

<sup>76</sup> Scottish Government (2017) *Housing Options (PREVENT1) Statistics in Scotland: Update to 30 September 2017*. <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0053/00530434.pdf>

<sup>77</sup> Fitzpatrick, S., Pawson, H., Bramley, G., Wilcox, S. and Watts, B. (2016) *The homelessness monitor: Scotland 2015*. Crisis: London.

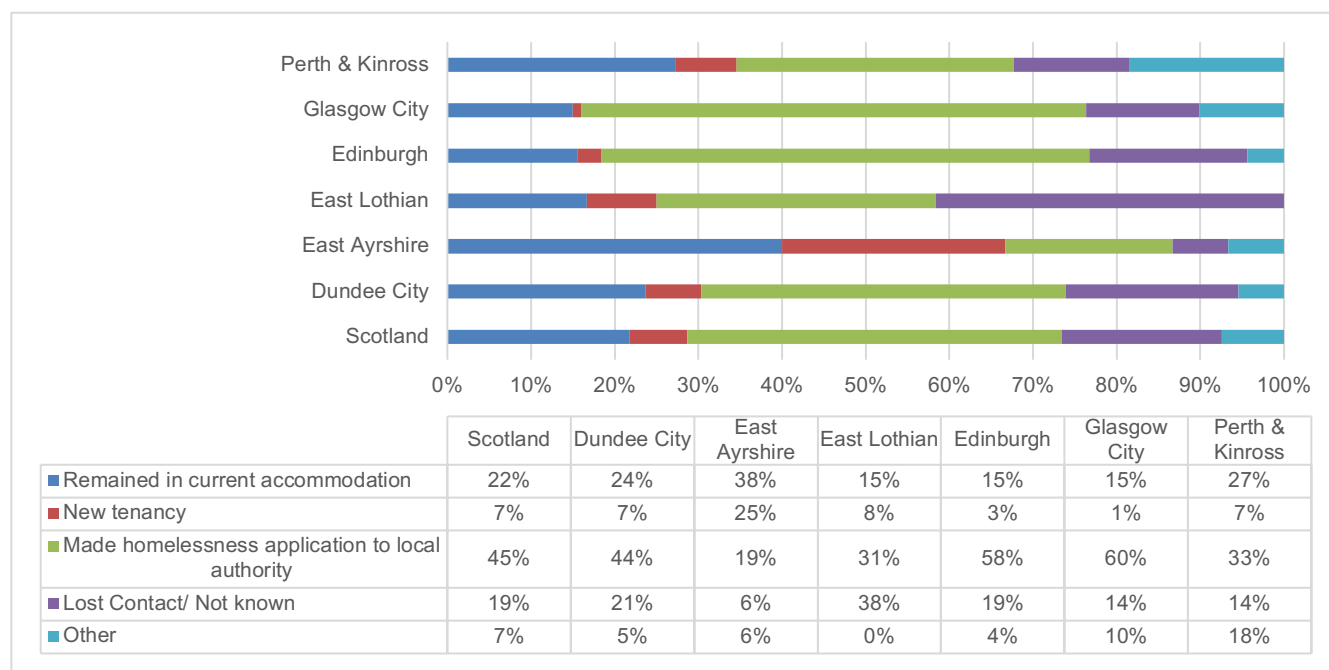
<sup>78</sup> Scottish Government (2017) *Housing Options (PREVENT1) Statistics in Scotland: Update to 30 September 2017*. <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0053/00530434.pdf>; Fitzpatrick, S., Pawson, H., Bramley, G., Wilcox, S. and Watts, B. (2015) *The Homelessness Monitor: Scotland 2015*. London: Crisis.

[https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/236831/the\\_homelessness\\_monitor\\_scotland\\_2015.pdf](https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/236831/the_homelessness_monitor_scotland_2015.pdf)

<sup>79</sup> Scottish Government (2018) *Housing Options (Prevent1) Statistics in Scotland: 2017/18*. <https://www.gov.scot/Resource/0053/00536986.pdf>

because their issue is resolved)<sup>80</sup>. In a further 7% of cases, households accessed new accommodation.

Figure 4: Outcomes of housing options approach by case study: 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018 (%)



Source: Housing Options (Prevent1) statistics 2017-2018

With this national picture in mind, there were substantial variation in the rate of Housing Options approaches, the kinds of prevention activity undertaken and the reported outcomes of prevention activities across our case study areas.

In Edinburgh, we see just over 2% of households approaching the Housing Options service (higher than the national average), and prevention activity dominated by general housing and tenancy rights advice (62% of activities, far higher than in any other case study areas). Informing clients of their rights under homelessness legislation makes up the next biggest component of prevention activity (30%), with more substantive forms of prevention making up only 7% of activities, the lowest in our case studies. The majority of Housing Options approaches end in a homelessness application being made (58% compared to 45% nationally), possibly reflecting the limited options available in its tight housing market context (see chapter 3). A fifth (19%) end in the household losing touch with the service, in line with the overall national figure.

Though noting “good progress” (Edinburgh, statutory) in improving prevention work over the last few years, there was a consensus in Edinburgh that that opportunities for further improvements remain. These included: further improvement preventing social sector evictions (noting recent progress in this area<sup>81</sup>); accessing mid-market rent properties for households who can afford it; integrating welfare rights, money advice, employability, Housing Options and homelessness services on a locality basis; and helping families avoid eviction from the private rented sector. Improved employability advice and support, and

<sup>80</sup> Fitzpatrick, S., Pawson, H., Bramley, G., Wilcox, S. and Watts, B. (2016) *The homelessness monitor: Scotland 2015*. Crisis: London.

<sup>81</sup> In 2017, a report by Shelter Scotland highlighted very high and increasing levels of evictions by social landlords in Edinburgh. Shelter Scotland (2017) *Research Report: Evictions by social landlords in Scotland 2012-2016*. Edinburgh: Shelter Scotland.

interventions targeting private sector tenants, were seen to be particularly crucial in the Edinburgh housing and labour market context, specifically it's buoyant economy and the increasing role (according to local stakeholders) of the private rented sector driving homelessness:

"we're trying to make a much better link with employability services because in terms of ongoing casework, I think that's an area that we're missing out and I think that financial inclusion and employability services needs to form a key part of the housing options casework." (Edinburgh, statutory)

"when you look at the number of people presenting from the private sector, last year 800 people came in from the private sector. Now our officers carry extremely high caseloads and what we're seeing is an increase in the number of people who have always had private sector tenancies, never touched the services before coming in. I just wonder [whether it would make a difference] if we had the ability or the resources to use the Notice to Quit period, that eight weeks to work with a family almost on a daily basis... if we had the capacity to do that." (Edinburgh, statutory)

As this last quotation indicates, a key constraint on prevention efforts identified by several stakeholders was resources:

"There's a lot more mileage to be had [in terms of homelessness prevention] but partly it's balance of resources because if you're struggling to pay for existing services, you'd have to transfer resources across and then what happens? It's a continual juggling act." (Edinburgh, statutory)

Local informants in Edinburgh were also concerned about the impending implementation of Universal Credit in the city, and its impact on levels of need and the local authority's capacity for homelessness prevention.

In Dundee, we see rates of Housing Options approaches around the national average (1.6% of households), but a broadly similar distribution of preventative activity. Prevention activities are dominated by general housing and tenancy rights advice (46% of activities) and informing households of their homelessness rights (43%), but 'other' forms of activity (seen more often in the other four case study areas) play a minimal role (11%). Housing options approaches are most likely to end in a homelessness application (44%) or with households staying in their current accommodation (24%), but 21% lose contact with the service (broadly in line with the national figure).

As in Edinburgh local informants identified a range of ways in which prevention activity could be improved. First, despite previous efforts to achieve a "corporate approach" to homelessness with responsibility for prevention and alleviation accepted across key local partners and stakeholders, there was a feeling that joint working could be further improved, with one key informant voicing frustration that agencies can "regard homelessness as being the first resort rather than the last" (Dundee, statutory). Improving partnership working is a key priority of the current homelessness strategy, including via the Lead Professional model, which will give people at risk of homelessness, and in particular those with complex needs, access to "a named contact person and supports and services [that] can be coordinated in a way that prevents homelessness and promotes wellbeing"<sup>82</sup>. Second, the high proportion of private rented sector housing in the area (23%, compared to 15% nationally) was identified as an important current driver of homelessness, particularly

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<sup>82</sup> Dundee Health and Social Care Partnership, et al. (2016) *Housing Options and homelessness strategic plan (2016-2021)*.



among families, linked to affordability concerns and welfare reform pressures, pointing to another key area of enhanced homelessness prevention work. Third, some local informants saw potential gains to be made “further upstream” (Dundee, statutory) by earlier intervention rather than prevention work nearer crisis point, reflecting similar views in other case study areas.

In Glasgow we see higher rates of Housing Options approaches than nationally (2.7%) but a somewhat different profile of prevention activities. As in Edinburgh and Dundee, general advice, and advising households of their entitlements under homelessness legislation remain the dominant activities (40% and 36% respectively), but in Glasgow ‘other’ more substantive activities play a greater role, accounting for a quarter of prevention work (24%). The main other preventative work reported is a referral to health/social work or employment services (16% of activities). In Glasgow, a very high proportion of Housing Options approaches (60%) have the outcome of the household making a homeless application, with lower than average outcomes of staying in current accommodation and accessing a new tenancy (see figure 4).

This statutory sector local informant in Glasgow expressed the view that gains made via homelessness prevention are largely, albeit not completely, exhausted. Homeless acceptances in the city have almost halved since 2009/10 (from 8,000 to 4,200 in 2017/18) and this local informant explained that they do not expect major further reductions, with gains in terms of TA pressure to be made by addressing the ‘process issues’ discussed in chapter 3:

“[Housing Options has made a] major difference in the sense that it's basically halved our applications over the last five or six years from 11,000 down to five and a half. It could probably go a bit lower, but... you can see... the law of diminishing returns as applied to housing options that there's not much further to go. So... core homelessness will be about 5000 in Glasgow. They will be the applications we take and... it's about how quickly we do those assessments, how quickly we generate the Section 5s and how accurately we shape that demand and push it towards the housing supply” (Glasgow, statutory)

Two voluntary sector local informants commented in positive terms of the level of preventative work now being undertaken in the city, noting the “huge coordinated training programme” (Glasgow, non-statutory) that had been undertaken with housing associations and the local authority’s willingness to work with third sector providers on prevention and reducing repeat homelessness. Some areas for further improvement were nevertheless identified. First, statutory sector informants saw progress to be made in further embedding the Housing Options model and prevention efforts across relevant local authority teams:

“as we reform our casework service I think they look at it in terms of whether or not on a day-to-day basis we embedded that practice across certainly our... teams... I think we could perhaps just revisit that homeless prevention agenda.” (Glasgow, statutory)S

Second, and echoing points made in other areas, moving towards earlier prevention was seen to promise gains, as it was recognised that households can present to the local authority ‘too late’:

“Sometimes... by the time that people approach for that type of support, it's too late and there's not a huge amount that can be done... I think over the years we're getting better at it as it starts to embed in terms of practice within housing associations and things... housing officers are – anecdotally speaking anyway – getting better at recognising

when is the right time to intervene with somebody for what form of Housing Options. As with everything I think there's more we could do.” (Glasgow, non-statutory)

A different non-statutory local informant identified the ‘crisis’ in homelessness services (i.e. the authority sometimes failing to discharge their statutory duties under homelessness legislation) as a barrier to such progress, explaining that in their view the local authority is “unable to shift resources back upstream to the prevention elements because the emergency is an acute emergency” (Glasgow, non-statutory).

As in Glasgow, in Perth and Kinross the majority of Housing Options activity involves general housing and tenancy rights advice (53%) or informing households of their entitlements under homelessness legislation (28%). The ‘other’ prevention activities were dominated by interventions with landlords (14%). This balance of activities achieved a distinct set of outcomes, with 27% of Housing Options approaches ending with the household remaining in their current accommodation (higher than the national level and double the level in three of the other case study areas, see figure 4) and only a third ending with the household making a homeless application (considerably less than 45% seen nationally).

The qualitative evidence collected as part of this study suggests a distinctive approach to homelessness prevention in Perth and Kinross, with a strong emphasis on ‘outreach’ work and early intervention as part of the Home First transformation programme, and it may be that not all of this activity is captured at the household level via Housing Options recording processes. Local informants explained that the council work with the local prison, domestic violence charities, families with children truanting from school, housing associations, schools, youth organisations, social work teams/child protection services and hospitals to identify those at risk of homelessness. Relevant teams have also been trained in mediation to work with young people and their families, and landlords. Following the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Groups recommendations, the local authority introduced a personalised budget, which frontline staff can access directly for prevention activities:

“[staff] don't have to fill out a big form and tick a box... it's not a lot of money but what we can do with that, we don't have to go through the usual hoops as a local authority. It gives staff that flexibility, it empowers them as well... it's being quite creative, things that we would never be able to do... before” (Perth and Kinross, statutory)

Despite these efforts, homeless acceptances have actually increased over the last year (from 700 to 830), something one statutory sector informant described as the authority being the “victim of their own success” i.e. bringing more households into the ambit of the statutory homelessness system via their early intervention work than would otherwise have been the case. Ultimately, the Home First agenda aims to minimise use of TA via a combination of prevention and rapid rehousing interventions (see chapter 7).

Given these recent efforts to expand and strengthen prevention and early intervention work, there was less emphasis than in other case study areas on potential areas for improvement. Local informants did, however, voice concerns that increasingly strict and lengthy grant decisions being made by the Scottish Welfare Fund might threaten prevention and tenancy sustainment efforts:

“Community Care Grants, they take ages, the processing, people don't always get everything within that... I understand that money is tight and what not, but people [are] jumping through hoops to get one little carpet... they're now saying that people aren't vulnerable because they're not homeless long enough... we've had Community Cares

declined because of that and I'm like, 'You are kidding me'." (Perth and Kinross, statutory).

In our remaining two case study areas (East Lothian and East Ayrshire) Housing Options activity appears to be low. Around 0.25% of households make such an approach in both areas (compared to 1.6% nationally), with just 80 approaches in East Ayrshire and 120 in East Lothian during in 2017/18. With this in mind, they stand out from other areas in that the majority of their Housing Options activities (66% and 58% respectively) constituted 'other' kinds of interventions extending beyond general advice and information about households entitlements.

In East Lothian there was an emphasis on 'rent/repairs/referrals/negotiations with landlords' and 'help to move property' (both accounting for around a fifth of activities). East Lothian particularly stands out, however, in the high rate of lost contact following Housing Options activities (38%, double the national rate) and the somewhat lower proportion of outcomes involving households staying in their current accommodation (15%).

Local informants described a very challenging context for prevention work, which may in part explain the very low level of Housing Options activity in the area. A key factor here was the roll out of welfare reform generally and Universal Credit specifically, which local informants linked to higher rent arrears and levels of hardship, in turn increasing demand for Discretionary Housing Payments and Scottish Welfare Fund grants:

"the impact Welfare Reform has had on prevention has been incredible. Every time there has been a change in terms of Welfare Reform agenda, that has further impacted on the risk of homelessness. The DHP (Discretionary Housing Payment) fund has been stretched to the max in terms of [the] ways that we're trying to utilise it, either through the benefit cap cases, the under 35 rule. The private renting sector in terms of Universal Credit now being introduced, trying to keep landlords on board... all of these thing... it's just continually battling and looking for options which [are] dwindling." (East Lothian, statutory)

"Universal Credit has a massive impact in terms of the level of crisis grants that's been applied for through the local authority... the funds have really been swallowed up a lot by crisis grants, which has impacted on the high priorities that we're going to get through the Scottish Welfare Fund, they are tighter. A lot of people will not get a Scottish Welfare Fund moving from temporary accommodation unless they're linked with [the local authority homelessness] team, they'll get an automatic refusal" (East Lothian, statutory)

This local informant also commented, that the introduction of Universal Credit had reduced the council's ability to identify struggling households (because Universal Credit is administered centrally and not by local teams, Housing Benefit datasets are no longer a source of prevention intelligence). This may, at least in part, explain the very low levels of Housing Options activities reported in East Lothian in 2017-2018, given that approaches were 3.5 times higher in 2015/16 (at 430), prior to Universal Credit's introduction in the area.

Despite this broader picture of dwindling opportunities for prevention in a challenging environment, local informants identified areas where gains could be made. In particular they saw the potential for stronger earlier intervention facilitated by better partnership working:

"sometimes it amazes you when you have somebody who presents, where somebody in another agency has known about it for months and just decided it wasn't their role to

maybe pass information on. Or put [them] in touch [with the local authority]" (East Lothian, statutory)

"A lot of people didn't actually want to leave their accommodation but by the time they've come to us.... They've lost their accommodation because we've lost the time limit to work with them. So things like mortgage to rent schemes, adaptations and properties, that is the way that we have to look at things, it is about keeping them where they are and there is options to keep people where they are. It's just people aren't aware of them or there's other agencies who see the outcomes as being moving them to other accommodation, when in actual fact, it's about doing what we need to do [to keep them where they are]." (East Lothian, statutory)

Local informants also saw a modest role for helping households' access mid-market rental accommodation, modest given that the cost of such accommodation is seen to be only marginally lower than PRS accommodation and considerably higher than the (low) local authority rents charged in the area.

In East Ayrshire, two thirds of prevention activities involve forms of support beyond housing advice and information about entitlements under homelessness law. The emphasis of these other activities is on: financial advice and assistance (21%); interventions with landlords (16%); and mortgage and home ownership advice (7%). These activities translate into a higher than average proportion of households accessing Housing Options services remaining in their current accommodation (38% compared to 22% nationally) or accessing a new tenancy (25% compared to 7%), though again, the overall scale of these activities is very small.

Gaps in homelessness prevention work identified by local informants in the area included the "lack of services and resources for people with addictions" (East Ayrshire, statutory) and the need for buy-in and commitment from addiction services, but also criminal justice and third sector organisations. Access to the Scottish Welfare Fund was again identified as a key challenge for homelessness prevention efforts, with local informants reporting that depending on the time of year and availability of resources households could only access "the bare essentials" through the fund (the "means to cook and a bed", East Ayrshire, statutory), rather than a 'full package' covering white goods and a decent range of furniture.

### **Length of time spent in TA**

The average total length of time households across Scotland spent in TA in 2017-2018 was 171 days, or around five and a half months. Across our case study areas, average stays ranged from less than half of this national average in East Ayrshire (80 days, or around 2.5 months), to two times the national average in East Lothian (336 days or around 11 months). Across the six areas, we see the distinction between high and low TA pressure authorities identified in chapter 3 replicated, with East Ayrshire, Perth and Kinross and Dundee having shorter lengths of stay than the higher pressure areas of Glasgow, Edinburgh and East Lothian.

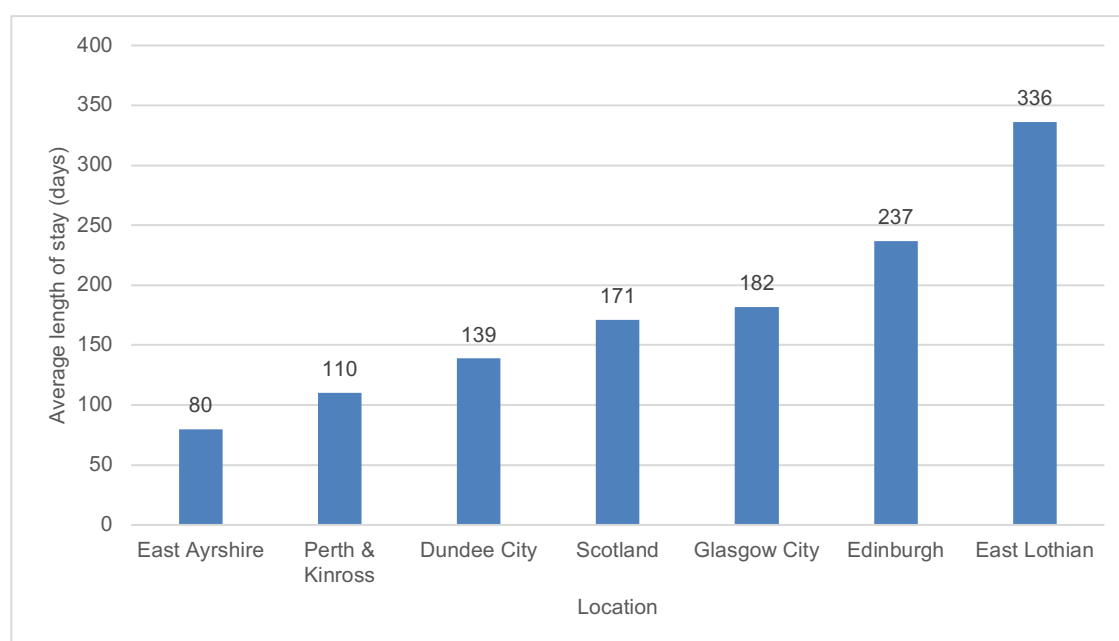
The longer lengths of stay seen in Edinburgh and East Lothian appear to be linked again primarily to housing market and supply issues, with the particularly high lengths of stay seen in East Lothian (relative even to Edinburgh) are likely explained by a combination of factors including: very low local authority rent levels in East Lothian (meaning households will wait longer for this form of settled accommodation and see alternatives as less desirable); East Lothian's strong reliance on the social sector TA, in which lengths of stay tend to be much longer than in the forms of TA more heavily relied upon in Edinburgh (B&Bs and hostels); and Edinburgh's reportedly very strong emphasis on moving

households on from TA. Though this emphasis appears to pay dividends in Edinburgh in achieving a comparatively fast ‘flow’ through TA compared to other high pressure authorities (see table 5a in chapter 3 in particular), and is in line with the current shift towards ‘rapid rehousing’ approaches. Some non-statutory local informants in Edinburgh did not see this shift in wholly positive terms, concerned in particular that it crowds out the importance of what happens *during* people’s stays in TA:

“reporting to the council, if [hostel TA] occupancy’s good and if the move-ons is good for good reasons that ticks their boxes. As long as they’re good that’s almost like, tick, tick, but there’s a bigger story within that” (Edinburgh, non-statutory)

“It’s been explicitly and openly said in meetings that we’re not fussed what happens in your service. I mean that’s incredible, that’s an incredible statement. We don’t actually care what happens, how you get there, we want people moving on.” (Edinburgh, non-statutory)

*Figure 5: Average length of time (days) in temporary accommodation (across all placements) during 2017/18*



Annual Homelessness Statistics 2017-2018

Note: Figures are based on the average total duration of all individual placements within the same homelessness application, for TA cases that exited during 2017/18

This might in part be explained by the different ethos evident in voluntary and statutory sector attitudes to the role of TA discussed further below.

The role of a litany of ‘process issues’ in Glasgow has already been described as the cause of the high TA pressure in the city (see chapter 3). This dynamic clearly underpins the relatively high length of stay seen there compared to the national average, in particular taking into account the consensus among local key informants that the city does not face housing supply issues so clearly influential in Edinburgh and East Lothian. Among the key factors identified by the Scottish Housing Regulator were: the local authority failing to generate sufficient Section 5 referrals to housing association to meet demand; the strong focus on comprehensive and phased needs assessment, even for households that don’t

need it; the local authority not adhering to its 'one reasonable offer' policy in all cases; the local authority allowing households to whom its duty has been discharged to stay in TA for significant periods; and an emphasis on 'tenancy readiness' which can create barriers to move on<sup>83</sup>. These themes were reflected in local informants' views:

"there is a whole issue around council discharging its [settled accommodation] duty... if there was a more front-loaded system where people's housing options and what are they're looking for was worked out early on in their journey, then we could make sure that the offer that they get is reasonable and fits their needs. Then, if somebody rejects that, then we've got a conversation to have with them." (Glasgow, non-statutory)

"there's definitely blockages in the temporary accommodation system in Glasgow... there's systemic issues around that. I don't think people are moved on quickly enough. I don't think people are given enough support in their temporary accommodation and I don't think the system is proactive enough to get people to that last destination quick enough, which is a secure tenancy." (Glasgow, non-statutory)

"I don't think anybody's particularly joining up the needs of the individual. Case work/social work are looking at their individual needs, possibly their support needs and so on, and not necessarily looking at the long-term rehousing situation. Housing associations [who lease TA to the local authority] aren't particularly involved in engaging with that individual or the council really, around long-term solutions, so there's a vacuum" (Glasgow, non-statutory)

On this issue of there being a disproportionate focus on support needs assessment within Glasgow's homelessness services, this voluntary sector participant explained that this was in part an unintended consequences of the 'Support Duty' introduced in 2013<sup>84</sup>:

"you do these big support needs assessments for everybody. Therefore... you don't start processing your Section 5 until all of that is done, 'till you've got all of your information there for everybody. A lot of that was a driver from that new legislation when it came in that says, 'Right, okay, everybody who you have a reason to believe might need support, you have to go through this assessment' – which becomes a procedural thing... you're dealing with thousands of people... and then we just create backlog after backlog after backlog." (Glasgow, non-statutory)

This statutory sector participant also felt that the crisis at the front end of the TA system in Glasgow (whereby the local authority was failing to meet its duties to homeless households, see chapter 3) crowds out any proactive focus on flow through TA among case workers:

"the focus is entirely on the pressure at the front around temporary accommodation. As soon as we get somebody into temporary accommodation there is pressure off, back, who is next? Then the person who is in temporary accommodation who the next person is to get in that temp is left there for too long" (Glasgow, statutory)

An extremely strong theme – and source of frustration – among local informants was the "pervasive... prevailing culture" (Glasgow, non-statutory) of 'tenancy readiness' in Glasgow. The approach was described in the regulator's report as follows:

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<sup>83</sup> p. 8 in Scottish Housing Regulator (2018) *Housing people who are homeless in Glasgow*.

<https://www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/publications/housing-people-who-are-homeless-glasgow>

<sup>84</sup> Fitzpatrick, S., Pawson, H., Bramley, G. Wilcox, S. and Watts, B. (2015) *The Homelessness Monitor: Scotland 2015*. London: Crisis. [https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/236831/the\\_homelessness\\_monitor\\_scotland\\_2015.pdf](https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/236831/the_homelessness_monitor_scotland_2015.pdf)

“After assessing that a person is homeless, the Council’s teams decide whether a person is “tenancy ready”, that is they are capable of sustaining a tenancy and so can be referred to an RSL to be housed. The Council does not define ‘tenancy readiness’ or provide clear and consistent guidance for staff on how to assess whether a person is “tenancy ready”. Indeed, we received conflicting messages from the Council on whether “tenancy readiness” should be part of its assessment of people who are homeless. Where it assesses a person as not ready for a tenancy the Council aims to work with the person to become “tenancy ready” and review the case every four weeks. However, not all of the Council’s teams are consistently meeting this target. As a result some people experience delay in being reassessed. We also found that the Council’s case records were not always clear on why a person had not been referred to an RSL. While it is appropriate for the Council to seek to understand the support a person may need to sustain a tenancy, it is unclear on what legal basis the Council requires a person to whom it owes a duty to secure a home for to demonstrate “tenancy readiness” before it moves to discharge that duty.”<sup>85</sup>

Local informants participating in the current study strongly echoed these concerns, emphasising the human cost of and in their view lack of rationale underpinning this emphasis on tenancy readiness:

“[a] fellow we spoke to in one of the hostels last week; he was saying nine months he’s been in place and now they’ve decided he’s tenancy ready. For a guy who had his own flat all his life... Nine months it’s took them to decide I’m tenancy ready’... He was saying, ‘I don’t need any support. I just want my own flat to move on with things.’”(Glasgow, non-statutory)

“Just because that young person is 17, is choosing not to use their washing machine for instance, doesn’t mean that they’re not tenancy-ready. If their kitchen’s a mess, it doesn’t mean that they’re not tenancy-ready, there’s soft skills there that should be supported... you would see quite a lot in services where adults who work there would be quite demeaning towards young people about money, financial management and being unable to budget your money. Young people, forever... young people have made bad financial decisions and prioritised other things over things that are important and that’s just called learning... It’s about nurturing and caring for people and not just placing criticism on top of them. Then, using tenancy-ready or they’re not tenancy-ready as a catch-all term... what does that mean?” (Glasgow, non-statutory)

Local authority informants were broadly accepting of these critiques, acknowledging that the idea of ‘tenancy readiness’ has become “a hindrance” and driven longer lengths of stay in TA than necessary. They explained that a shift of approach is currently underway:

“Quite often folk have languished... because there have been assumptions made rightly or wrongly, that the person is not tenancy ready. As a consequence the temporary accommodation lasts longer than we would probably necessarily think would be viable” (Glasgow, statutory)

“historically, we had an idea that somehow our job was to do a homelessness assessment to provide temporary accommodation [and] somehow either judge people to be tenancy ready, or therapeutically become involved with them and render them tenancy ready. Then it became a gap [and] people... didn’t make transition... Now I

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<sup>85</sup> p.9 in p. 8 in Scottish Housing Regulator (2018) *Housing people who are homeless in Glasgow*.  
<https://www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/publications/housing-people-who-are-homeless-glasgow>



think they're a lot clearer that temporary accommodation should be temporary accommodation" (Glasgow, statutory)

"where we are just now is that we are better informed in Glasgow, particularly probably over the last three or four years... in the main the tenancy ready definition has been something that's been a hindrance... [and there's] an opportunity for us now to reflect on well, for many folk they can just go through with little or no support." (Glasgow, statutory)

While the non-statutory sector key informant quoted above was clear that the logic of 'tenancy readiness' did not apply to young people, this was not the view of those in the statutory sector who continued to see the idea of 'tenancy readiness' as helpful in responding to young people experiencing homelessness:

"The young people's stuff is a very different gig entirely. I don't think there's any real paradigm shift in the notion that our young people who we look after, their systems aren't ready for their own tenancy." (Glasgow, statutory)

The culture of 'tenancy readiness' apparent (if beginning to shift) in Glasgow was less in evidence as a feature of local authority approaches in other case studies, although in Dundee, a statutory sector local informant noted that "somebody might have their application suspended because we feel they're not ready for a tenancy" (Dundee, statutory). It was more clearly apparent in the orientation of some non-statutory hostel providers in a number of areas (see below).

In East Ayrshire, lengths of stay in TA are very short (see figure 5), with local informants only expressing concern about specific sub-groups of the homeless population spending too long in TA, and in particular those subject to Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements. This was not due to a lack of offers of settled accommodation, but the delays resulting from multiple agencies needing to assess the suitability of those offers:

"for those that are subject to the MAPPA restrictions... they could be in temporary accommodation for a considerable amount of time. The offers are forthcoming, but for various reasons they might not be suitable, so that person may just have to stay in the hostel or in temporary accommodation until it's been deemed suitable by all the agencies." (East Ayrshire, statutory)

In Perth and Kinross, the average length of stay in TA during 2017-2018 was 110 days or around 3.5 months (according to HL3 data), considerably lower than the national average. Annual Return on the Charter data shows a sharp reduction in average episode length (from 132 days in 2016-2017 to 81.5 days in 2017-2018), linked to the introduction of the Home First approach discussed further in chapter 7.

Sitting beneath these broad differences in the average length of stay in TA across local authority areas are more specific dynamics in relation to the duration of time different household types spend in TA, and differential lengths of stay across different types of accommodation.

Figure 6 shows variation in length of stay by household type across the case study areas. The focus of our analysis is on single households and those with children – the household types that predominate among homeless applicants and those in TA<sup>86</sup>. In general, households with children have the longest periods in TA (204 days on average) while single

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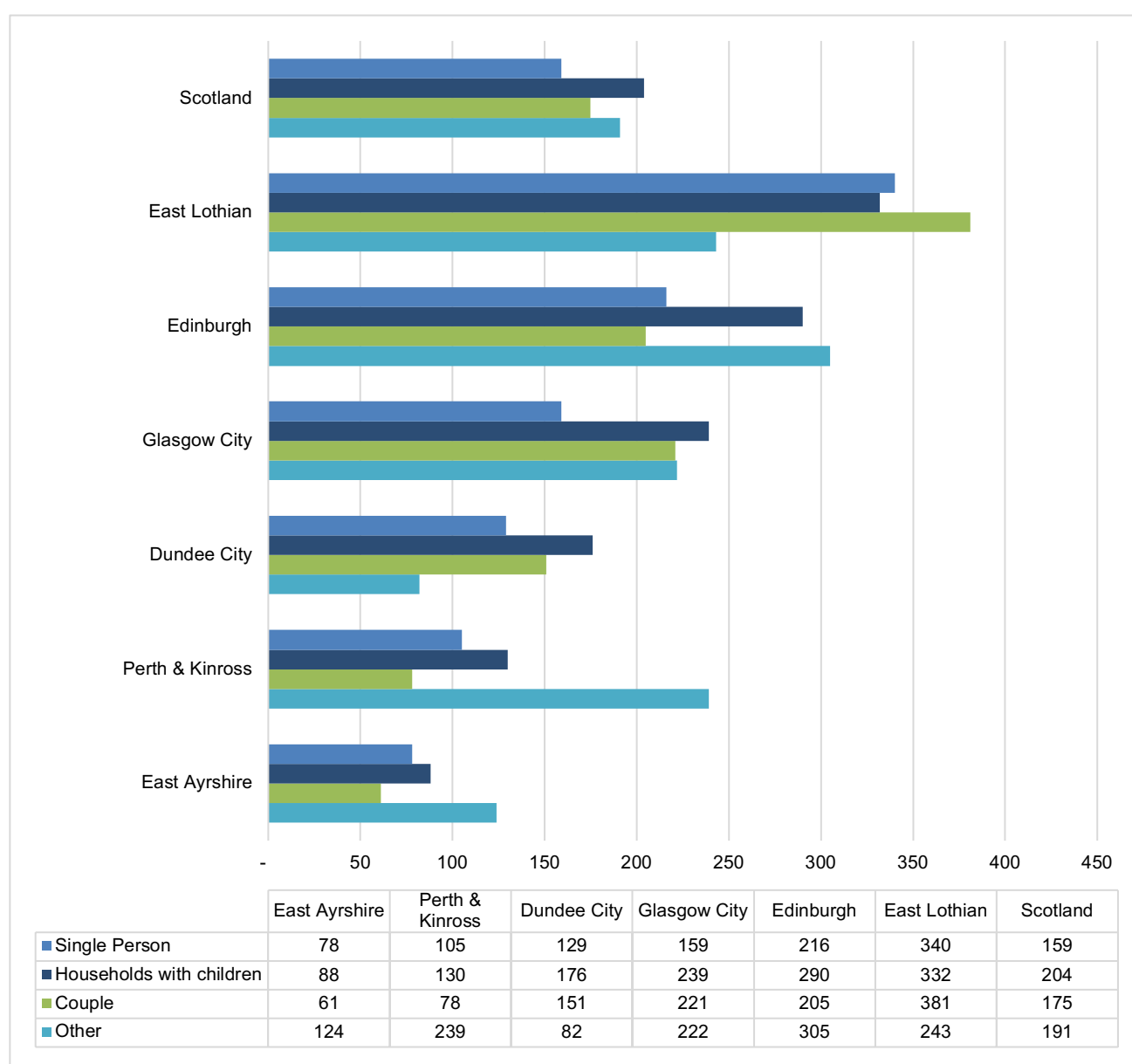
<sup>86</sup> Scottish Government (2018) *Homelessness in Scotland: 2017-18*. <https://beta.gov.scot/publications/homelessness-scotland-2017-18/>



people have the shortest periods in TA (159 days on average). Mirroring this national level picture, families do worse in terms of length of stay than single households in five of our case study areas (all but East Lothian). In Dundee, this statutory sector local informant emphasised that while average lengths of stay in the city are comparatively good, some families – especially larger families – wait exceedingly long periods for appropriate settled accommodation:

“I feel sorry for people going into a temporary situation knowing that they might have to wait two and a half years for a house... I know the statistics maybe don't look too bad but it's still not great, you know, some families have to wait too long for temporary accommodation and then wait too long for permanent once they're in temporary... we need more larger houses” (Dundee, statutory)

*Figure 6: Average length of time (days) in temporary accommodation (across all placements) during 2017/18 by household type – case study LAs*



Source: Annual Homelessness Statistics 2017-2018

In East Lothian, by contrast, *single* households wait longest in TA, reflecting voluntary and statutory sector key informants view that the lack of one-bedroomed accommodation is the “biggest pressure point” (East Lothian, statutory) or “one of the worst things” (East Lothian, statutory) about the local housing market slowing move-on.

East Lothian, Edinburgh and especially Perth and Kinross appear to have specific difficulties moving ‘other’ household types, but the number of households in this category in TA is small.

Using Annual Return on the Charter data, we can also explore differences in average length of stay in TA for *individual placements* within TA by property type (the data above by contrast shows average length of time in TA across *all* individual placements). Across Scotland, the longest periods in TA are recorded as being in ordinary housing association properties and Private Sector Leasing (PSL) (both with average stays of 218 days or around 7 months) and local authority properties (147 days or around 5 months) (see table 11). Note that in Edinburgh, PSL TA is believed to be recorded as ‘other’ in this dataset reflecting its distinct intended use as a “longer term type” of TA (Edinburgh, statutory). In several authorities (East Lothian, Dundee) we see stays in housing association and PSL much longer on average than in the local authorities’ own stock. This may reflect the greater control local authorities have over TA placements in their own stock. This ‘control dividend’ certainly underpins East Ayrshire’s strong preference for ‘in house’ TA stock and management, which they identify as enabling closer management of TA and faster void turnaround times.

*Table 11: Average length of stay (days) in TA by type and case study LA 2017-2018*

LA	LA ord.	HA ord.	LA hostel	RSL hostel	Other hostel	B&B	Refuge	PSL	Other	All
East Lothian	416	455			226	70		470	497	216
Glasgow City	171*	245	68	78	79	24		196	53	105
Dundee City	132	193	70	62	45	1	127			82
Edinburgh City	328	323	74	113	127	44			293	82
Perth & Kinross	118		45		90	2				82
East Ayrshire	64		46	205*			118			61
Scottish average	147	218	58	71	70	36	120	217	119	103

\* note that the numbers in these forms of accommodation in the relevant authority are very low according to HL2 data  
Source: ARC data 2017-2018

Lengths of placement in hostel-type TA across Scotland are very significantly shorter than in these self-contained forms of TA at around 60-70 days or 2-2.5 months, but we see big variations in placement length across local authorities. In East Lothian, for instance, placements in their small stock of supported hostel TA are three times the national average for this form of TA (other hostel), reflecting that this stock is primarily supported accommodation for young people. For this group, there may be something of an emphasis on their ‘tenancy readiness’, but local informants also report the challenges they face securing one-bedroomed accommodation for this group. In East Ayrshire, we see very short stays in the local authority run hostel (well below the national average), but very long stays (almost three times the national average) in the local authority’s very small stock of

RSL/housing association hostels, likely to reflect the support needs of those in this form of accommodation.

In Edinburgh and Perth and Kinross, we see lengths of stay in RSL/housing association and other hostels being much longer (twice the length) than those in local authority run hostels. This pattern is also evident, though to a much lesser extent, in Glasgow. There are several potential explanations for this. First, and similar to the dynamic in self-contained forms of TA, local authorities retain greater control of levers to move people on from TA when they are in their own stock. Second, it may reflect that households with distinct support needs and profiles are in these different forms of TA, with lower-needs groups with fewer barriers to rehousing in local authority hostels and higher needs groups in more specialist support housing association or other hostel provision (this is certainly the pattern we see in East Ayrshire). However, in Edinburgh, some local authority hostels specifically cater for high-needs groups, and other forms of hostels to mixed or lower needs groups.

Qualitative work in Edinburgh and Perth and Kinross points to an alternative possible explanation for the longer placement lengths seen in non-local authority hostels, namely a different ethos of provision and conceptualisation of the role of TA. These voluntary sector respondents describe part of TAs role as being a place for personal transformation and reflection where residents can 'pause' and consider 'who they want to be':

"[TA residents benefit from] the space to kind of get their life in order and almost decide who they wanted to be when they move on, if you like... it's a moment in time that if they'd been shoved in to a place straightaway after that they would have just continued with the same, you know, because there wouldn't have been time for this reflection to change" (Edinburgh, non-statutory)

"I really think that it can be counter productive when you start putting timescales on things and put undue pressure on people. I think they need to be careful... You don't want to start to institutionalise people and [let them get] so comfortable that it then can become [a] problem that they don't want to move, because effectively they're moving into a small community, in a sense. I think it's something we need to be mindful of, but it's not good either where we are seen to be rushing people out the door. At times, my experience has shown that they're inviting a failed tenancy and that's putting the person further back." (Perth and Kinross, non-statutory)

In Dundee, this voluntary sector local informant expressed a similar view, albeit emphasising the 'resident-led' nature of decisions to suspend people's homeless application:

"if somebody's way at the beginning of their Outcome Star, they could be saying, 'I'm just not ready. I'd rather stay in temporary accommodation'. So we can actually suspend their application and hold on to them a bit longer, so long as it doesn't look bad with the figures because we're always getting hammered with, 'The Scottish [Government] don't like them to be in for more than a year.' 'Yeah, okay but this guy's been in jail for nine months of that and he actually wants to have support before he gets a tenancy, so he can sustain it, so would it be okay if we keep him?!... I can understand why you don't want people long-term homeless. I do see that but if somebody is actually looking to get some skills so they can sustain a tenancy then I don't see why we should be arguing" (Dundee, non-statutory)

The kind of philosophy expressed by this cluster of non-statutory local informants appears to be consistent with seeking longer stays for TA residents within non-local authority hostels. In Dundee, we do not see this pattern in the length of placement figures presented

above, however, perhaps reflecting the acknowledgement that the practice is not seen to be in line with national policy agendas. In Perth and Kinross, a statutory sector key informant explained that the local authority are currently reviewing lengths of stay in non-local authority provided hostels, partly motivated by a concern that people may be being kept in this form of TA longer than needed:

“We didn't know if it was because there was a bit of under occupancy that they were keeping people longer or is it because people needed to be in that accommodation because it was supported, that's a piece of work that we're currently working on... [either way] I would query, 'Can that support be provided in a mainstream tenancy'? If so, why isn't it being provided there? ... At the end of the day, if we feel the person is ready to move on and they've been there in a hostel environment for 12 months, that's not good.” (Perth and Kinross, statutory)

The shortest average TA placements are seen in B&B accommodation at 36 days nationally. Among the case study areas that make any significant use of this form of TA (Edinburgh, East Lothian and Glasgow) average length of stay varies from 24 days in Glasgow to 70 in East Lothian. Taking into account these lengths of placement combined with the *scale* of TA use in these areas, it is clear that implementing the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group recommendation to limit stays in B&B to 7 days for *all* household types (rather than just families, as is the status quo) will be very challenging in these areas. Local informant views on this recommended reform to the Unsuitable Accommodation Order are discussed further in chapter 7.

## Rehousing outcomes

The final section of the chapter considers rehousing outcomes for homeless households across the case study areas.

### Settled housing outcomes

Table 12 shows the final outcomes for households assessed as unintentionally homeless or threatened with homelessness in 2017/18. Nationally, 69% of this group achieve a settled housing outcome in either the social or private rented sector. For around one in seven (14%), the outcome is not known because they lost contact with the local authority.

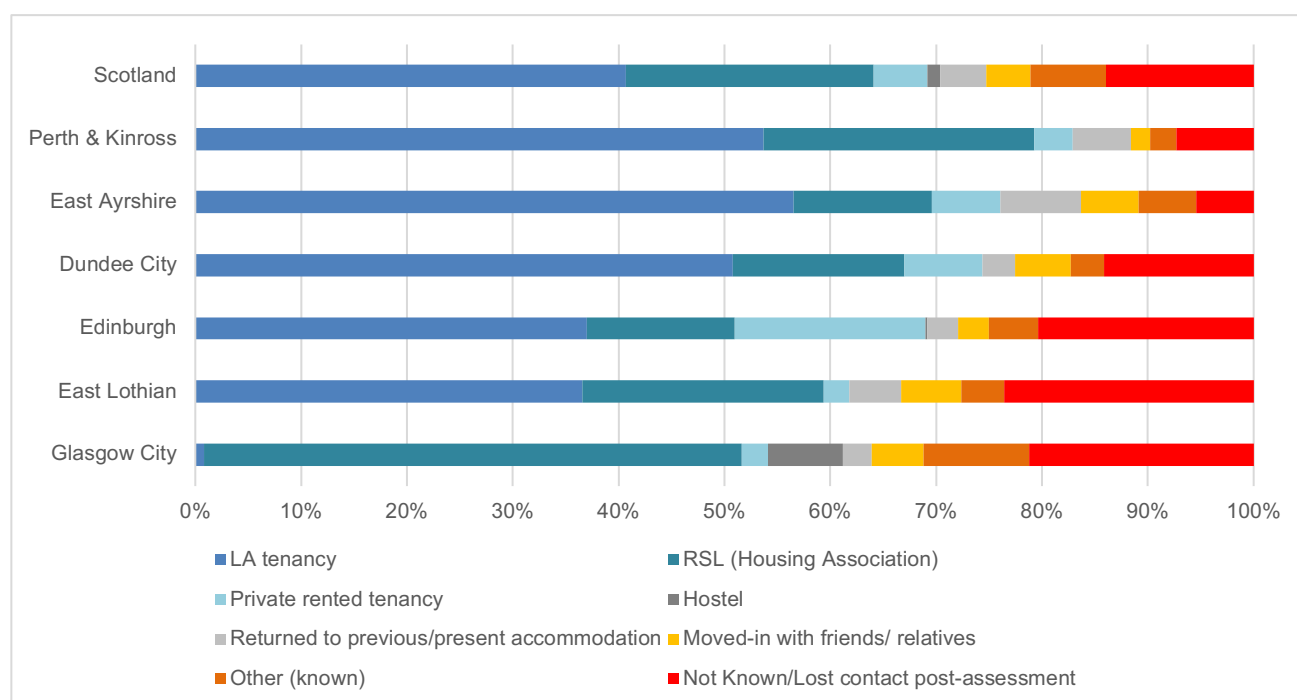
*Table 12: Proportion of homeless outcomes settled and not known/lost contact*

	% settled	% not known/ lost contact post assessment
Perth & Kinross	83%	7%
East Ayrshire	76%	5%
Dundee City	74%	14%
Edinburgh	69%	20%
East Lothian	61%	23%
Glasgow City	54%	21%
Scotland	69%	14%

Source: Annual Homelessness Statistics 2017-2018, Table 32: Outcomes for households assessed as unintentionally homeless or unintentionally threatened with homelessness by Local Authority, 2017-2018

Figure 7 shows this data in finer grained detail, in particular highlighting the role that local authority, housing association, and private rented sector accommodation play in rehousing homeless households. At the national level, local authority housing is the most common outcome (41%), followed by housing association tenancies (23%). Private rented accommodation is the settled housing outcome for just 5% of homeless households.

Figure 7: Homelessness outcomes – case study LAs and Scotland



Source: Annual Homelessness Statistics 2017-2018, Table 32: Outcomes for households assessed as unintentionally homeless or unintentionally threatened with homelessness by Local Authority, 2017-2018

Table 13 uses ARC data to indicate how the prioritisation of social housing for homeless households is reflected in the proportion of all new lets (including transfers) made to this group, and the differential contribution made by local authority and housing association housing. The local authority-level data on the proportion of housing association lets to homeless is an estimate, based on assigning housing associations with stock spread across a local authorities to an area in which most of their stock is located in or excluding them from the data as ‘national operators’<sup>87</sup>. Nationally, a third of all social housing lets are made to homeless households, reflecting a rather higher level of allocations by local authorities (43%) and lower level by housing associations (26%).

We see large variations in this range of rehousing outcomes between our case study areas, and more specifically a division between the two groups of authorities already identified in this report: on the one hand, the more pressured TA areas dealing with higher volumes of households in TA with a slower flow through TA (in Edinburgh, East Lothian for housing market reasons and in Glasgow for ‘process’ reasons), and on the other, lower pressured TA areas dealing with lower volumes, with a faster flow and shorter stays in TA (Perth and Kinross, East Ayrshire and Dundee).

In the high pressure areas of Glasgow and East Lothian we see the percentage of settled housing outcomes well below the national average (54% and 61% respectively). This reflects supply pressures in East Lothian, but ‘process issues’, and in particular insufficient referrals to housing associations being made, in Glasgow (as discussed above). It is noteworthy that despite the pressured TA situation in Edinburgh, the city achieves settled

<sup>87</sup> Although there is not an LA identifier within the ARC dataset, it is possible to assign each housing association to a local authority, based on the main are of operation identified in the 2012-2013 Annual Performance Statistical Return, which was reported before the first Scottish Social Housing Charter ARC data was collected in 2013-2014.

housing outcomes for over two thirds of homeless households, in line with the national average. A series of factors identified elsewhere in this report may be relevant here, including the strong emphasis placed on move-on rates by the local authority discussed above. Of likely greater importance are the high proportion of social lets in Edinburgh allocated to homeless households (over 50%, compared to the third seen nationally) and greater diversity of settled housing options employed in the city, with 18% of homeless households accommodated in the private rented sector.

*Table 13: Proportion of all lets that are to homeless applicants, by LA and HAs*

	<b>LA – homeless lets % of all lets</b>	<b>HA – homeless lets % of all lets</b>	<b>All – Homeless lets as a % of all lets</b>
<b>Scotland</b>	43%	26%	34%
Edinburgh City	74%	34%	52%
East Lothian	48%	50%	49%
Perth & Kinross	58%	37%	49%
Dundee City	41%	30%	36%
Glasgow City	N/A	22%	22%
East Ayrshire	22%	16%	21%

Source: ARC data 2017-2018 – (C8.5 Lets to homeless applicants, C8.5.1 Section 5 referrals, C8.5.2 Nominations from the local authority and C8.5.3 Other homeless lets combined as a % of all lets – including transfers)

This reflects the specific circumstances within Edinburgh, which has a comparatively low stock of social housing (necessitating a higher proportion of that stock to try and meet demand) and a higher stock of private rented sector accommodation (meaning that some of that accommodation is needed to help accommodate homeless households). This statutory sector key informant explains the reasoning, but also emphasises that the cost of private sector accommodation in the city also requires a suite of interventions to maximise tenants' longer term income, as well as helping them enter private rented accommodation in the first place:

“we're probably the lowest in the country unfortunately [in terms] of our stock in social housing... So until we resolve that balance somehow, we almost need better access to the private sector... we're going to market for our rent deposit guarantee scheme which is fine. So we can give people the deposit if they can't afford it... [but] the rents are so high in Edinburgh that there's almost an argument to say it's great paying the deposit and it's great getting them in there for a few months but... we need to do more in terms of income maximisation, more [via] the employability services to widen people's housing options” (Edinburgh, statutory)

Also relevant is the way social housing allocations are handled in the city via a Common Housing Register, EdIndex, which seeks to ensure a common allocations policy across housing associations and the local authority. Table 13 clearly shows that the proportion of lets made to homeless households by both kinds of social housing provider are high by national standards, at three quarters of local authority lets and a third of housing association lets. This non-statutory sector local informant explains that ensuring an adequate proportion of housing lets go to this group was a founding priority of EdIndex, which also facilitated a move away from the ‘adversarial’ model of Section 5 referrals:

“most of the housing associations... are effectively operating on the same allocation system [as the local authority] across city... [and] we have been able to park section five referrals ... The decision was taken by the council who said, look this is ridiculous, we've got section five referrals and nominations going to housing associations when



actually, the housing associations are working with the same allocation system as the council so as long as the housing associations are following the particular quotas around access to homeless households... there should be no need to have section five referrals... One of the rules of the... partnership is to monitor how that is working in terms of outcomes because we want to make sure that we are playing our role in terms of statutory homeless” (Edinburgh, non-statutory)

Statutory sector key informants were also positive about the non-adversarial and collegiate relationship with social landlords in the city, noting housing associations’ recent commitment to increase the number of lets to homeless households further<sup>88</sup>. Acknowledging that housing association allocations to homeless households are far higher than in other local authority areas, and growing, statutory sector stakeholders nonetheless felt there was a legitimate question to be raised given that housing associations let around half the proportion of their stock to homeless households as the local authority do (34% compared to 74%):

“if we’re letting 73 per cent of our houses to homeless person[s] with the same allocation system, why haven’t we asked [housing associations] to come up to 50 per cent... if you look at the national statistic around it the argument is they’re already committing more than other local authorities probably and proportionally I would say. However, if you isolate Edinburgh and see it in the context that we’re having to let 73 per cent of our houses to homeless people... That’s the dilemma... they are our partners and they’ve committed to letting additional homes and they support us... So it’s a real dilemma. How far do we push it with them? When they’re actually helping more than other local authorities” (Edinburgh, statutory)

“my view is we should use Section 5... [but] it would change the whole philosophy and concept of the EdIndex initiative and operation. After so many years when we were doing things in partnership and [via] negotiation... But we might be getting to the point where, if they’re not meeting the same targets as we are, that we might have to consider [using section 5]” (Edinburgh, statutory)

The recently established Homelessness Task Force in Edinburgh has recommended a review of allocations policy in the city<sup>89</sup>.

In this context, it is interesting to note that in East Lothian both housing associations and the local authority allocate around half of available lets to homeless households, albeit that housing association homes makes up even less of the authorities housing stock than in Edinburgh (5% compared to 7%). While also a high TA pressure area like Edinburgh, East Lothian makes very little use of the private rented sector as a settled housing destination for homeless households, with local informants seeing this as reflective of the high cost of such accommodation in the area both in absolute terms but also relative to the low level of local authority rents (the same dynamics are seen to limit the role of mid-market rent accommodation in the area). Also relevant to the authority’s minimal use of private rented accommodation is likely to be the fact that it makes up only 10% of housing stock in East Lothian, compared to 26% in Edinburgh, and the implementation of Universal Credit in the area which local informants explain has made landlords less willing to accommodate those

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<sup>88</sup> City of Edinburgh Council (2018) *Homeless people allocated extra homes* City of Edinburgh Council news release, 8<sup>th</sup> December 2018 [http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/news/article/2411/homeless\\_people\\_allocated\\_extra\\_homes](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/news/article/2411/homeless_people_allocated_extra_homes)

<sup>89</sup> Housing and Economy Committee (2018) *Homelessness Task Force – Actions, Recommendations and Outcomes*. Paper for City of Edinburgh Council’s Housing and Economy Committee, Item 7.7, 7th June 2018. [http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/4413/housing\\_and\\_economy\\_committee](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/4413/housing_and_economy_committee)

in receipt of benefits. The council have an open market acquisition 'buy back' programme to increase the supply of social housing in the area.

In two of our three high pressures local authority case studies (Edinburgh and East Lothian), we see social housing playing a compensatory role, rehousing a higher proportion of homeless households than seen in less pressure areas. In our third high pressure area (Glasgow), by contrast, it is stifled access to social housing that is a key underpinning cause of TA and homelessness pressure, rather than housing supply and housing market factors, with only just over a fifth of social housing allocations going to homeless households in the city. As explained above, the solutions to the truncated role currently played by housing associations in providing settled outcomes for homeless households in the city primarily involves system reforms within the local authority to generate more demand for housing association stock. While entirely agreeing with this diagnosis of the problem and its solution, this key informant also pointed to challenges on the housing association side, arguing that the local authority should make more frequent use of Section 5 referrals where housing associations are not meeting their rehousing obligations:

"housing associations, as a whole, like anything, there's good, bad or indifferent, but I would say generally, the housing association movement wants to play its part and I think it's for the council to get their systems in place to deal with that... one of the things that the council hasn't done which it could have done... [it] does have section five legislation so if it does get a housing association that doesn't play ball, then there is recourse that they can enter into. But... that doesn't seem to ever happen for whatever reason because maybe, it's expensive or maybe again, people don't want the confrontation" (Glasgow, non-statutory)

Local informants in Glasgow noted that 'flipping' social sector TA properties into secure tenancies where suitable for the applicant was something done only "rarely" (Glasgow, non-statutory), but something that could be incredibly helpful in addressing the needs of TA residents. One local informant working in the social housing sector explained that this is an option being looked at "more proactively" (Glasgow, non-statutory) by some housing associations. Another non-statutory key informant explained that it is used on an ad hoc basis at present and worked "really, really well" (Glasgow, non-statutory) for TA residents who are settled in their temporary furnished flat and have "made it their own home. The thought of then moving in somewhere else can cause a lot of unnecessary anxiety, especially if they're older with health problems" (Glasgow, non-statutory). The informant went on to explain that flipping only happens on a small scale when senior managers become involved, and is not something frontline workers (e.g. support workers) can identify as a good solution and pursue: "it would be high-level, which is nonsense... People should already connect with housing officers and the community liaison teams in saying, here is a proposal, this will be good because... then it will be done very quickly" (Glasgow, non-statutory).

Our lower pressure TA areas (Perth and Kinross, Dundee and East Ayrshire) see much higher proportions of homeless households achieving settled outcomes, with 83% in Perth and Kinross, well above the level in any other case study area. This is primarily achieved via rehousing into the social rented sector, with half of social housing allocations going to homeless households (58% of local authority and of 37% housing association lets). Local informants described a series of factors key to achieving this, including working "very closely" with housing associations in the area to achieve "high levels of throughput for homeless households", something aided by a joint allocations policy. Within the local



authority, a key factor seen to ensure appropriate prioritisation of homeless households is having a merged allocations and homelessness team:

“That was key for us, integrating our homeless teams and our allocations team because we had separate homeless team and allocations team for a long time. Therefore it would almost be the homeless team would assess the homeless applicants and almost have to go with a begging bowl saying I need accommodation for, but bringing those teams together [has helped]... that has been down to staff ownership and accountability... they're sitting together, it works. There's a lot of local authorities, I think, where they're still separate.” (Perth and Kinross, statutory)

Additional factors emphasised by local informants were a strong focus on quick and effective voids management (meaning that vacant social housing stock can be ready to let very quickly); a conversion programme focused on ‘flipping’ those in suitable social sector TA into a secure tenancies; a buyback programme to acquire new council properties from the open market; and a “fairly healthy new build programme” (Perth and Kinross, statutory). Minimal use is made of the private rented sector as a destination for homeless households, but key informants did note that enabling access to the tenure is used as a means of preventing homelessness and minimising the need for TA. Accessing the PRS is harder in rural parts of the authority where rents can be high. Local informants commented that discharge of duty into the private rented sector may become more frequent given recent reforms to private rented tenancies in Scotland (via the Private Housing (Tenancies) Act).

Dundee occupies a middle group position in terms of rehousing outcomes within our case studies, with three quarters of homeless households achieving a settled housing outcome (above the national average), and most of those entering the social housing. Seven per cent of households are rehoused in the private rented sector, slightly above the national average and second only to Edinburgh amongst our six case studies, perhaps reflecting the relative dominance of PRS accommodation in the area (23% of properties compared to 15% nationally). The proportion of social lets allocated to homeless households sits around about the national average at 36%, with local authority lets accommodating a higher proportion of homeless households (41%) than housing association (30%). Dundee do not make extensive use of ‘flipping’, having stopped a previous conversion programme due to the costs associated with furnishing new social sector TA:

“We used to have a policy which worked really well of flipping our smaller flats but that was withdrawn.... we got told to stop doing that because it was too expensive... you have to go and get another one and to set up a fully furnished, even a small flat you're talking between £3,000 and £5,000.” (Dundee, statutory)

East Ayrshire is in the unique position of combining high settled housing outcomes (76%), mostly in the social housing sector (70%), with a low proportion of lets to homeless households (21%), indicating relatively modest demand for social housing in the area. Despite this, local informants report ‘flipping’ social sector TA only “very rarely” (East Ayrshire, statutory), but as something that may be explored in the future as a means of minimising disruption to households and/or reducing their TA portfolio:

“we know that householders are settled within a property and it would actually cost us less in the long run just to keep them in that property. It's something we'd need to weigh up against the cost of, possibly, replacing the goods for another temporary accommodation unit... or look at using flipping to a secure tenancy as a means to then, ultimately, reduce our portfolio.” (East Ayrshire, statutory)

Tenancies in the private rented sector are the outcome for 7% of homeless households in the area, a similar level to that in Dundee, and the local authority are also considering making more use of the PRS since changes to private rented sector tenancies:

“I'd be quite keen to investigate more with the private sector with the changes to the private tenancy agreement, and also just really utilise that section [allowing authorities to discharge the rehousing duty into the PRS] than we haven't in the past.” (East Ayrshire, statutory)

Social lettings agencies were also seen as a possible means to create positive additional housing options for homeless households, especially to increase access to furnished settled housing in the private rented sector given reported delays accessing Scottish Welfare Fund grants to fund white goods and basic furniture:

“sometimes it might be better for somebody to access a private let that's fully furnished and not even have to think about how they're going to get the money for this or the money for that, for the delays until the Scottish Welfare Fund's processed all that kind of stuff that we could really, really sell private lets, and especially with the [improved] security of tenure” (East Ayrshire, statutory)

### ***Lost contact and unknown outcomes***

The patterns seen across our six case study areas in terms of settled housing outcomes mirror differences in the proportion of homeless households who lose contact with the local authority and whose outcomes are unknown. In our high pressure areas, we see very high rates of lost contact (East Lothian 23%, Glasgow 21%, Edinburgh 20%) compared with the lower pressures areas (East Ayrshire 5%, Perth and Kinross 7% and Dundee 14%). Having a strong influence on these levels of lost contact are likely to be the length of time households spend in TA, with longer stays appearing to be associated with higher levels of lost contact. Levels of lost contact are especially low in East Ayrshire where lengths of stay are particularly low (just 2.5 months compared to 5.5 nationally). In the Glasgow context, the Scottish Housing Regulator highlighted the “length and complexity”<sup>90</sup> of relevant processes as a significant factor driving high levels of lost contact, noting in particular that the council does not attach a named case worker to homeless households for the entire duration of their application. This is in contrast to Perth and Kinross where there is a fairly extensive approach to keeping in touch with homeless households up to the point of discharge of duty (whether they are in TA or not) combining automated text messages with regular contact with a named housing officer and a regular drop-in service for which no appointment is needed:

“we can automatically do a text, 'Hi, it's so and so here, just getting in touch... do you need any further assistance, let us know, we have a drop-in service'. We tell them when the drop-in service is... they don't need an appointment, we see them on the same day. For those a wee bit more complicated or [who] have got children, there's vulnerabilities, maybe we have to make phone contact with them or we might do a house visit, we might ask our locality team to maybe pop out just to check things over and stuff like that. So it's all dependent on the individual” (Perth and Kinross, statutory)

Edinburgh has put substantial recent effort into improving the rate of lost contact, with their analysis revealing substantial variation in levels of lost contact between individual caseworkers, parts of the city and relevant services, with subsequent learning leading to

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<sup>90</sup> p.12 in Scottish Housing Regulator (2018) *Housing people who are homeless in Glasgow*.  
<https://www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/publications/housing-people-who-are-homeless-glasgow>

improvements in lost contact rates quarter by quarter. Despite these gains, local informants see the case loads carried by officers as a key challenge in avoiding lost contacts:

“we found that you had officers, individual officers who were, for example, six times more likely to lose contact with somebody than house somebody. Then on the other end of the spectrum we had people who were three times more likely to house somebody than lose contact. So what we tried to do was speak to the officers who were at the end of this scale where they were more likely to house somebody than lose contact and said, 'What are you doing? What are you doing differently from this officer up here?'... analysing why we lose contact more often or why particular services in parts of the city would lose contact more often... We monitor on a monthly basis, lost contact... but we recognise that it's a real challenge for us when you're carrying sometimes between 120/150 cases, you know who's in contact with people is incredibly difficult sometimes and sometimes we're not always in control of it.” (Edinburgh, statutory)

Levels of lost contact in Dundee, while at the national average, are substantially higher than in our other lower TA pressure local authorities. Relevant here may be the particular nature of Dundee's homeless population and TA provision, and the longer lengths of stay in TA in the city (albeit still below the national average, see above). This non-statutory local informant – commenting in particular on single homeless people's experiences within Dundee's hostel provision – saw 'falling out of the system' as reflecting of lack of appropriate support:

“there's issues here about support, about choice. We run a huge human sausage factory... you drop people in at this side, and they pop out in the system, ideally with a flat of their own, but there's an awful lot of people falling out the side. So, let's give people, actually, real options... Let's give people quality service. Let's give them the support they need. Us giving them six weeks support here on their 15<sup>th</sup> attendance at this unit, what are we actually doing for people? We're actually not really supporting them in any kind of long-term, meaningful way. We're sticking plasters over them and kicking them out, so, let's look at an integrated, coherent strategy where people actually can see an outcome which makes them feel part of a wider sense of Dundee, rather than just, you're one of the homeless scumbags” (Dundee, non-statutory)

### ***Rehousing outcomes and complex needs***

Forthcoming research undertaken by I-SPHERE and funded by the Lankelly Chase Foundation exploring severe and multiple disadvantage in Scotland has examined rehousing outcomes among those with various combinations of disadvantage in addition to homelessness (including offending and substance misuse). It reveals starkly different outcomes depending on the extent of people's needs and experience of disadvantage. For instance, while 69% of homeless households overall achieve a settled housing outcome, this drops to 54% for those with experience of homelessness and either offending or substance use, and just 36% for those experiencing all three of these domains of disadvantage. Similarly, rates of lost contact increase substantially alongside levels of need/disadvantage: over a fifth of those with experience of homelessness and either offending or substance use lost contact, with those experiencing disadvantage across all of these domains (homelessness, offending and substance use) twice as likely to have

unknown outcomes/have lost contact with local authorities than those experiencing only homelessness.<sup>91</sup>

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group's recommendations place a strong emphasis on implementing Housing First interventions for homeless people with complex needs. Moreover, three of our case study areas (Edinburgh, Glasgow and Dundee) and two further local authorities (Aberdeen and Stirling) are involved in the Social Bite/Corra Housing First initiative (see chapter 7). Combined with overturning the 'tenancy ready' culture, particularly in Glasgow, these developments should help drive improvements in the rehousing outcomes for those with complex needs over the coming years.

### ***Tenancy sustainment***

The final part of the outcomes story is the extent to which tenancies are sustained following homelessness (figure 8). Across Scotland, 88% of tenancies to statutory homeless households were still being sustained after twelve months, very similar to the tenancy sustainment rate across all tenancies suggesting an absence of substantial issues in relation to tenancy sustainment for this group.

Across our six case study areas, sustainment rates for homeless households vary from 85% in Glasgow and East Ayrshire to 93% in Dundee. In East Ayrshire, tenancy sustainment rates are slightly lower than average across all tenancies (suggesting more generalised sustainment issues in the area) while, in Glasgow, tenancy sustainment rates are slightly lower among statutory homeless households than for all tenancies (88%). Tenancy sustainment rates are slightly higher for statutory homeless households in Dundee (93%) than for all tenants (91%) and around the national average for both groups in East Lothian (88%) Edinburgh (87%) and Perth and Kinross (89%).

As discussed above, key concerns for our case study local informants in relation to tenancy sustainment include increasing pressures on and delays accessing the Scottish Welfare Fund to furnish new tenancies, and the continued implementation of Universal Credit.

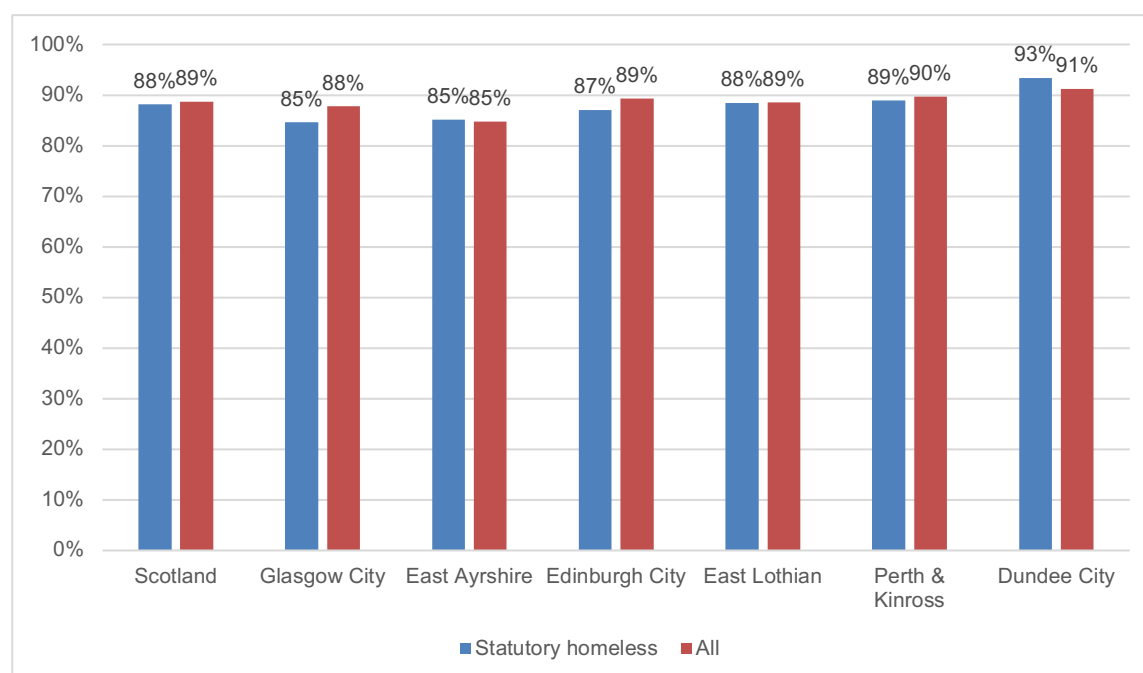
In Perth and Kinross, the early shift to a rapid rehousing response to homelessness (the Home First model) came with challenges associated with tenancy sustainment. This non-statutory sector key informant explains:

"The Home First model that's adopted by the council means people go in [to settled housing] very quickly... when it was first being used.... we had service users who were signing up for properties... and nothing was in place. No community care grant had been applied for... There were lots of issues whereby people were going in and they were going into a flat that had nothing because the big difference was with temporary accommodation the council used previously, it was furnished. So to move someone from there, within a very short window, into accommodation that had nothing, is not ideal" (Perth and Kinross, statutory)

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<sup>91</sup> The figures reported here are taken from the forthcoming report: Bramley, G. et al (forthcoming 2019) *Hard Edges Scotland*. Lankelly Chase/The Robertson Trust.

Figure 8: Tenancy sustainment among homeless tenants and all tenants



Source: ARC data 2017-2018

While there are no signs of issues with tenancy sustainment among formerly homeless households in the 2017/18 ARC statistics quoted above, this is an issue the local authority appear to be taking seriously. Local informants report considering plans to improve the standards of settled social housing lets from a 'lettable standard' to a 'ready to occupy' standard:

"we're actually relooking at... our lettable standard... I think we need to have two standards, we need to have a lettable but [also] an occupying standard... with rapid rehousing because lettable is floor boards, it's clean, it's tidy. Where it's ready to occupy, it might have one carpet in the living room, do you know what I mean? It might have a washing machine, so it's ready to occupy, the person can go in it that day. Whereas ready to let, you're talking, there's nothing, so it's about again, how can we... really sustain people and make it that seamless transition into permanent housing?" (Perth and Kinross, statutory)

Steps had also been taken to offer a series of resources to those moving into settled accommodation, including decorating and cleaning packs.

We do not know about tenancy sustainment rates in the PRS, which is important in those areas making higher use of this form of accommodation as a settled housing outcome, in particular Edinburgh.

## Conclusion

With Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans due to be submitted to Scottish Government in December 2018, minimising the use of and lengths of stay in TA was high on local authorities' agendas. Prevention activity has been a focus for policy since 2009 and led to a large reduction in homeless applications across Scotland. Across our case study areas, most local informants saw scope for improved preventative interventions. Official data on homelessness prevention indicates that there may be more scope for preventative work in

local authorities currently recording low levels of prevention activity (though this may be a reporting issue), but also more scope for substantive kinds of preventative intervention beyond the 'light touch' advice and signposting that appears to dominate Housing Options services in Scotland.

According to those working in homelessness, a key area where further prevention gains can be made is in taking preventative efforts further 'upstream' from traditional prevention work, something which will require partnership working with a range of public and third sector agencies, including schools, housing associations, social work and child protection agencies. Some authorities are innovating in this area, working with private and social sector landlords to tackle eviction and empowering frontline staff prevent homelessness creatively using personalised budgets that can be accessed quickly. Reforms to the private rented sector in Scotland are also seen to increase scope to use this tenure to prevent homelessness (as well as to rehousing homeless households).

Cutting against these opportunities for more effective prevention are a series of threats and challenges. The tightening of Scottish Welfare Fund grant decisions was an area of considerable frustration given the importance of households having access to basic furnishings and household items when they are rehoused. This issue was particularly acute in East Lothian where Universal Credit has already been introduced, with pressures also on Discretionary Housing Payment budgets. Wider welfare reforms are also identified as having increased the ending of private rented sector tenancies as a cause of homelessness in some areas, and reducing the willingness of landlords to accommodate those on benefits. Gaps in access to addiction and mental health services and weak partnership working arrangements were also seen to undermine prevention efforts in some areas. More generally, local authorities face trade offs in allocating further resources to prevention work, especially where caseloads for assisting already homeless households are already high.

The overall duration of households stays in TA is strongly associated with wider pressures, either on local authorities' supply of affordable settled housing or (in Glasgow) 'process issues' that inhibit people's progress through TA and into available settled accommodation. These include a strong emphasis on 'tenancy readiness' and assessing households' support needs. Other factors relevant to driving longer lengths of stay include the relative desirability of the spectrum of housing options available to homeless households (with wider rent differentials between local authority and other rental tenures argued to push up lengths of stay by some local informants), local allocations policies and relationships with housing associations.

Nationally, families with children have the longest stays in TA, but in East Lothian this pattern is reversed with single households waiting longest due to the lack of smaller properties. Longer stays are typical in dispersed forms of temporary accommodation (across the rental tenures) with shorter stays typical in hostels. In some areas there are much longer stays in non-local authority run hostels, potentially reflecting a different ethos in voluntary sector services that see supported hostel accommodation as a place for personal reflection and transformation. Stays tend to be much shorter in B&B but still reach averages of 1-2 months in higher pressure authorities. Limiting B&B stays to 7 days for all household types would thus be challenging in these areas.

Settled rehousing outcomes are most common in lower TA pressure areas, where rates of lost contact and unknown outcomes are also lowest. Higher pressure areas see a lower proportion of settled outcomes and higher rates of lost contact. Preliminary national analysis suggests that settled outcomes are much less likely and lost contact much more likely for those with experience of multiple forms of deprivation.

Authorities with higher settled rehousing outcomes often benefit from lower demand for social housing, as well as some use of the private rented sector in some cases. Other mechanisms reported as driving higher settled rehousing outcomes include the integration of allocations and homelessness teams within the local authority, and working closely with local housing associations. Edinburgh, despite having very high TA pressure secures settled outcomes for over two thirds of homeless households, reflecting the high proportion of social lets (especially local authority lets) going to this group, and high use of the PRS as a settled housing outcome. East Lothian also sees a high proportion of lets to homeless households. In these two areas then, we see social housing lets playing a 'compensatory role' in the context of TA pressure, whereas in Glasgow we see choked access to social housing relating to local authority processes driving TA pressure.

The PRS may play a more important role in rehousing homeless households in the future given strengthened tenancy rights and may add value in providing furnished accommodation for those needing it. The affordability and sustainability of PRS accommodation clearly remains a constraint, especially (though not exclusively) in higher demand housing market contexts.

## 6. Temporary accommodation resident perspectives

This chapter considers the views and experiences of people who are currently or have recently been in temporary accommodation in our six case study areas. It draws on focus groups and interviews with 52 individuals currently residing in – or with recent experience of – temporary accommodation. More details about the sample and nature of the fieldwork can be found in chapter 2. The findings from this phase of the fieldwork are reported here in relation to the three main kinds of TA: social sector temporary furnished flats, hostels and B&Bs. Commonalities and differences in people's experiences across these types of TA are drawn out in the concluding section of the chapter.

### Bed and Breakfast accommodation

Overall, TA residents had the most negative views about and experiences of living in B&B accommodation, but two groups can nevertheless be identified within those who had experience of this form of TA. The largest group were those with overwhelmingly negative experiences, but a small number reported more mixed and even in some cases positive views about their time in B&B.

Among the first group, strong negativity about B&B accommodation arose from the interaction of three main clusters of factors: **restrictions on residents' autonomy; a lack of support; congregate environments.**

**Restrictions to B&B residents' autonomy** took several forms, prime among them the imposition of a series of rules about behaviour such as 'curfews' dictating what time people had to be back at the B&B in the evenings, but also issues like having little choice about what or how much you can eat for breakfast, little control over the heating in your room, and being beholden to B&B staff to pursue repair issues:

"[at] a bed and breakfast, you're just going in, having a really not adequate breakfast, and then you're out, and that's what we get... The time restriction as well is quite inadequate." (Edinburgh, male)

"I'm nearly a 40-year-old man and I'm being told what time to fucking [be back at night]... Know what I mean? I should be allowed to decide when I come back, no fucking somebody else, nearly 40-year-old, fucks sake" (Edinburgh, male)

"If you ask you really want to open the radiator because my room is cold, come in check my room. They tell you something broke, something no working, now we need to call someone" (Edinburgh, male)

This East Lothian participant expressed a more generalised sense of a lack of ownership and control over the environment in the B&B he was staying in:

"nothing's your own. You're getting watched all the time, you've got to answer to councils, and everything else, it's just mental. I've never had nothing like this in my life" (East Lothian, male)

Also key to people's sense of having no autonomy within B&Bs was the frequent lack of cooking and laundry facilities:

"there's no cooking facilities, which is quite difficult for some people." (Edinburgh, male)

"It done my nut in that there wasn't any facilities like that but I was quite happy to buy myself a wee fridge to keep milk... There was no fucking washing machine, nothing like that, you couldn't cook if you wanted to cook so that's, it's just annoying that you didn't get shit like that, know what I mean?" (Edinburgh, male)



This meant that buying food could be extremely expensive for a group usually on very low income levels via Jobseekers Allowance:

“If you're in a B&B, obviously there's no cooking facilities. If you go out and buy a sandwich, or a can of juice, or a sweet, it costs you £3 anyway, £4, so, there's 30 per cent of your money away” (Edinburgh, male)

This female participant with past experience in a B&B in Glasgow reported that some of these same issues, combined with issues of uncleanliness, led her to give her daughter to her mother to look after shortly after moving into B&B accommodation. She also explained that the location of the B&B had been far from her social networks, with impacts on the cost of day to day living:

“The B&B was the [name of B&B]. I was in it for five days with my daughter, and she was just a baby... It was dirty... it was absolutely disgusting... I couldn't let the wean crawl about the floor, because it was just too dirty. She had to sit on the bed constantly, and you got your breakfast flung at your door in the morning in a brown paper bag. You weren't allowed visitors, obviously. You had to go outside and stand, and, because I was going out every day, I was going to the east, it was costing me a fortune, coming back, getting there, and coming back, and stuff like that, so, I ended up giving the wean to my mum. I moved in on the Monday, and I gave her to my mum on the Tuesday (Glasgow, female)

The second key theme underpinning strong antipathy to B&Bs was **the lack of support and a ‘caring’ environment**, and these three current hostel residents with past experience in B&Bs drew a sharp distinction between these forms of TA on that basis:

“what you've got to remember... is, a bed and breakfast is a business... All they're looking for is the money at the end of the month, and the week... so, the B&Bs, the bad B&Bs that homeless people have to go into, they're not looked after, these places, they're just sweat boxes.” (Edinburgh, male)

“up until just until two months ago, I never had an (Ed)Index number. I had to stay at B&Bs, so I felt like I was kind of forgotten about. The council just kind of like forgot about me, until I come to, obviously, here [a hostel], and they were able to chase it up for me and backdate it” (Edinburgh, male)

“[in B&Bs I witnessed] violent behaviour, self-harming. I've seen someone who self-harmed themselves really badly. In the middle of the night I was woken up to the ambulance service, and you just think to yourself, there's no one... We get people coming and checking on you here [hostel] in the mornings, to do checks and window checks, and things. In these B&Bs you could be lying in your room for days before anybody even knows something's happened to you, and I think that does happen a lot.” (Edinburgh, male)

As this last quote anticipates, a third key theme underpinning strongly negative experiences of B&B TA was the **‘social environment’ or the other people living there**, often connected with issues or substance misuse and anti-social behaviour:

“it was just the drug use, and the alcohol use. It wasn't controlled at all. People were just totally out on drugs.” (Edinburgh, male)

“People there is drug use, drinking, you come in... because you working you're very, very tired, someone else loud, too much loud and if you tell something you fight and for why the fight?” (Edinburgh, male)

The following participants reported having to move between B&Bs frequently because of conflict with or threats from other B&B residents:

"I just didn't feel it was very positive at all... I didn't have any support, anyone to talk to. You had to be in for a certain time. Where I was originally, it was quite rough. I was surrounded by a lot of people who I wasn't used to being around. I did feel quite frightened at times as well, so... It was always constantly, I was always moving from one to another, because there's always the issues. Not with me, but with other residents, and it just wasn't right for me." (Edinburgh, male)

"I think 15 B&B I'm change... One B&B two weeks, one B&B one month, one B&B two days" (Edinburgh, male)

A woman in Edinburgh was aware of people's negative experiences in B&B accommodation of the kinds discussed above. After researching the specific B&Bs she was offered accommodation in, she refused these offers of TA:

"The first B&B I got offered, we had Googled it, and it was for single people with mental health and drug and alcohol addictions. Taking three kids there, it just wasn't suitable. So we refused that... Went back the next day and they offered me two different B&Bs, which I knew people previously that had been in there. They said, 'Don't accept it'. So that's why we refused the B&Bs, and then that's why we were homeless for like, nine days. Then we got offered the temp accommodation [temporary furnished flat]." (Edinburgh, female with children)

During the nine days described here, this mother was separated from her children. They stayed with a relative while she stayed with a friend, something she described as "the worst experience ever".

One man in East Lothian had been accommodated not in B&B accommodation per se, but in what he described as "a pod... a big wooden hut thing" on a caravan site. He had been staying there for just over a week and was about to be moved into a chain hotel room instead. This experience was similar to those reported by B&B residents in some ways, characterised by access to very basic kitchen facilities for example ("there's a wee counter thing with just the kettle and the toaster on it... so, I'm starting to get sick of toast!), an extremely small living space ("There's nothing in it all, apart from a bed... You've just got a bed. I sit on the bed, there's a wee telly placed on the wall"), and access to shared bathroom facilities that in this case were a walk away from the accommodation ("You've got to go travelling for toilets, you've got to go travelling for showers"). Staying in this kind of TA didn't come with the 'social environment' challenges of B&B accommodation. Indeed, its main downsides were its isolation:

"There's no shops, or nothing, near it. You've got to get on a bus to go to the nearest shop... it wasn't that bad, it's just, you can't stay there all day, you'd go off your head, do you know what I mean? So, I've been coming up to my mum's, and that, now and again and going up to my daughter's, and that." (East Lothian, male)

The second and smaller group of participants with experience in B&B accommodation had more **mixed views** about this kind of TA. Sometimes, this was a reflection of individuals having stayed in a number of different B&Bs during the experiences of homelessness and having starkly opposing experiences, as this exchange between a group of women currently residing in hostel accommodation in Glasgow illustrates:

Participant 1: Do you know the only one I liked, the one across from [part of Glasgow]...  
The [name of B&B in Glasgow – B&B1].

Participant 2: The [B&B1's] amazing. I was only there one night, but you can get a fry-up, you can get a continental, you can get an English breakfast.

Interviewer: You get a proper breakfast? So, they do vary, the bed and breakfasts? They're not all equally bad?

Participant 1: Yes. The [other B&B in Glasgow – B&B2] is absolutely disgusting. As I said, I wouldn't even stick my dog on the floor, never mind the wean, but the [B&B1] was amazing, beautiful.

Participant 2: I've got photos of the [B&B2]... There was old men peeing in the corner of the room... It was getting left... they were just leaving it.

Participant 1: See when they were trying to get me somewhere from hospital, it was the one in [part of Glasgow – B&B2]. They phoned and said, 'We've got you a place in [part of Glasgow], and my worker came rushing up to the hospital, and he said, 'I wouldn't even put a dog in it,' It's that bad. [It was] so dirty. You don't need to go out on the streets to get drugs because there's so much drugs in the place... They're dealing inside it."

This East Lothian B&B resident reported mixed views, also in part related to different experiences in two B&Bs, explaining that overall the accommodation is 'pretty nice' but noting frustrations in relation to having to potentially register with a different GP given that his current accommodation is temporary. She had been staying in the current B&B for 6 weeks:

"This place is pretty nice. It's one of the better places, a lot better than the last place I was in. They have a cleaner that comes in every day that cleans the communal areas, and their provisions for food, for the breakfast food, and things, are always kept up, and on time, and the person that runs it's really nice... I drive, so, it's quite easy for me. My family are mostly in [part of East Lothian], so, it's not too far down the road for me, really, so, yes, it's okay. The last place I was in was in [other part of East Lothian], which was too far out for me, really, but, this place is good... I tried not to change GP, and tried to get them to let me stay there, because this is just temporary, but they've just written to me to say I have to change GP, so, I'm not actually sure about that yet... ... we have a cupboard each to store our food. We have access to the fridge and freezer, and, yes, there's cooking implements, and dishes, and all things like that." (East Lothian, female)

Having experienced two B&Bs in East Lothian, this participant went on to explain that the negative impacts of being in such TA had been vastly reduced by being in a better located part of the local authority in relation to her friends and family:

"It's not really impacted me much this time, I think, because I've stayed local, so, I'm still kind of able to be around my family and friends, unlike last time, when I was so far away that I was, kind of, isolated. I think being closer to family and friends has made a huge difference, and it hasn't impacted me much." (East Lothian, female)

This single male with addiction issues in Edinburgh was rough sleeping at the time of interview, but had an extensive history in different B&Bs and hostels in the city. He explained his strong preference for B&Bs over hostels, primarily because of the challenging congregate environment he had experienced in hostels in the past. He was particularly positive about his several month long experience in one very small B&B. The main challenge he was currently facing was accessing TA that would take his dog:

“The bed and breakfast, it was fine, I liked it, it was okay... I just liked the people that owned it and it was only a wee bed and breakfast, it only had four rooms. You could buy, we bought a wee fridge and that for in the room because there was no facilities like that... I'd rather be in a B&B because as I says, I don't like people, I get very aggressive towards other males... In a B&B it's quieter... [in] the hostels they're all running amuck fucking... some of them are good but I don't like hostels any more. Most of the B&Bs are actually all right, it's just trying to get in one with my dog.” (Edinburgh, male)

Finally, this mother of two was placed in a B&B in Edinburgh for one night while the local authority secured her a temporary furnished flat. She was extremely positive about the experience, despite initial fears having “heard so many different horror stories” about B&B accommodation in the past:

“the B&B in terms of what you could get was brilliant... really, really lovely. I mean I can show you a picture afterwards of it because I took a picture, I was like, 'Oh look, in a hotel.' It was three beds, it was clean, it was an en suite. The staff were very friendly. It was clearly used for emergency accommodation, but it was used for people I think who were more likely to play by the rules and not be anti-social. So I feel that it was a, if you could rank B&Bs in terms of where you're going to put people, that was a really good one... I was also exceptionally lucky that it was in the area, it was five minutes from school, so it didn't mean a huge uproot in life” (Edinburgh, female with children)

## Hostels

People's perspectives on and experiences of hostels were more evenly balanced than those associated with B&B accommodation, with a high proportion of those with experience in hostels reporting very negative *and* very positive experiences.

This mixed picture seems to reflect three factors: first, that there is enormous variation in the nature of hostel accommodation (so features of the hostel environment experienced negatively or positively in one, may be entirely absent in another); second, that people are more or less suited to or resilient in hostel accommodation; and third, that people can often experience different aspects of the same hostel both positively and negatively simultaneously.

As such, while findings in relation to this theme are discussed in terms of key positives and negatives about hostel accommodation, TA residents' often complex views and multi-faceted experiences of them should be borne in mind. The aim of this dichotomously structured discussion is to highlight the key components and characteristics of hostels that TA residents find supportive, positive or benign on the one hand, and harmful and negative on the other.

### ***Positive experiences of hostels***

By far the most dominant positive theme from interviewees of hostel TA is the consistent availability of **support** in some such accommodation units. Having support ‘on tap’ was clearly valued by many TA residents:

“The support is always on tap if you want to speak to them and any time they're willing to help you make phone calls or [do] any paperwork that you're not sure about, they help you out.” (Dundee, male)

“there's been someone, for example, from a couple of places, has come in, like, the importance of your mental health... so, that's obviously helped, not just with that, but

with other things too. Being able to help filling in forms for the medical assistant part of... wherever I end up for the next bit, you know what I mean?" (Dundee, female)

"these people actually care... There's a lot of people come in here with issues, mental issues, and all that kind of stuff, and broken families, or whatever, and here, you'll get that support" (Edinburgh, male)

"Because you've got support, you've got workers who actually work in the hostel, check on you, have chats with you and make sure you're okay. [They] help you in any way they can. Can't fault them." (Perth and Kinross, mixed focus group)

A particular element of support highlighted by those with health, mental health and addiction issues was help setting up and attending key appointments:

"Like, for example, today I was taken to my appointments. I wouldn't have been able to do that if I was at a B&B. I would've struggled getting out, and getting to these appointments on time, you know? Things like that, they benefit a lot you come into somewhere like [this]" (Edinburgh, male)

"I had stopped going to the doctor's, they got me back to a psychiatrist again, so, just last week I got put back on my proper medication, so they set all that up, and I think that's important then, that you're getting back to the medications that are keeping you at a stable level. There's a girl that comes in... she also supports you to, like, AA [Alcoholics Anonymous] meetings, and that, so that's good, as in, the staff then taking you to an AA meeting, or taking you to an NA [Narcotics Anonymous] meeting, or whatever, so that you're comfortable with that person, until you're then used to going yourself... once you're there, you build up your confidence yourself" (Glasgow, female)

Participants also reported valuing relevant health services coming into the hostel, rather than them having to go out to it:

"Even, like, the doctors, and that, you don't need to go to [location in Glasgow] doctors, they come out to you, and the pharmacist, and dentist, and that, so you don't really have to travel anywhere, because they come." (Glasgow, female)

Hostel staff can also play an important advocacy role for residents, helping other services tailor their response to the particular needs of the client. In this case, the hostel resident has addiction issues and was struggling to make appointments at relevant services made at particular times within the week:

"They [hostel staff] did help me, aye, but I keep letting myself down, myself, with the drink, you know what I mean? I've got another [appointment], and they asked me to go there last Friday, and they took me off the list. The staff here got me back on it. I missed the next one, didn't I? The thing is, they keep giving me an appointment on a Friday, and I'm usually... I'm a drinker, you know, I'm out... Yes, that's why they've made it a Wednesday, so they know for sure I'll definitely go. See if they said a Monday or a Friday, I'm like that, it's just not happening!" (Glasgow, male)

Support provided by hostel staff seemed to play an important role for some individuals in acknowledging and addressing mental health problems, and more generally as a source of emotional support as these two respondents from different hostels in Perth and Kinross describe:

"[staying in hostel TA has had a] good effect because beforehand I wouldn't of gotten or known any support I could speak to... about mental health and stuff... if someone says hostel, you probably think of a bunch of druggies and stuff like that all in one room kind

of thing, whereas that is actually more secure and more comfortable living and you have everyone around you to support you and speak to and just help you. There's a lot of help" (Perth and Kinross, female)

"The staff are really approachable as well. You go down at one o'clock in the morning, chat to them if you felt - if you didn't feel good or whatever, maybe you're having a shit night or something. You could go down and speak to them and [they] sit and chat away to you. They always mention that you can go to them... if you need help with anything... They really stress that, which is quite a good thing for your emotional and your mental wellbeing to have somebody there that would listen if you felt that you needed it, which is very handy." (Perth and Kinross, male)

These three participants explicitly drew comparisons between the support available within the hostels they had stayed in, and their experiences in/expectations of other forms of TA - temporary furnished flats in the first two cases, and B&Bs in the third:

"the staff push the help towards you, they tell you about stuff that you would never know about if you were in that homeless house yourself because nobody comes to visit you or anything. Nobody tells you there's this you can apply for, that you can apply for, all different things, you know what I mean? Whereas in here, they're constantly trying to get you to do stuff and giving you tickets to the gym and stuff like that whereas you would never know about that if you were in a homeless house" (East Ayrshire, mixed group)

"she [local authority staff] said, 'We would offer you a temporary furnished flat', but I said, 'No, I'm not ready for that'. I would rather go [into] rehab, or supported accommodation, because I've only had one flat... [and] I just felt as if I had a licence to drink, do you know what I mean, and that's how I ended up resigning from my job, so, I didn't know how to run a flat, and I just associated the flat with drink." (Glasgow, female)

"in a B&B... they're not interested, but if you look at something like this, and how they actually run it, and how they actually care about the people that comes in here, it's always well-staffed, and all that kind of stuff, it's absolutely superb." (Edinburgh, male)

Beyond this strong emphasis on support, those with experience in hostels reported particularly valuing hostel environments that were **comfortable, clean and well appointed with appropriate facilities**:

"Yes, it's so comfortable. It seems that it's actually not long been, you know, replaced everything. They do a good job of that, making me feel comfortable as well." (East Lothian, female)

"your room is so comfortable. It is, everything's brand-new, do you know what I mean?" (Male, Glasgow)

"Absolutely perfect. The rooms are amazing. You've also got your own wee chair. At the bottom there's a wee pull-out pouffe, so it's brilliant." (Glasgow, female)

"the rooms are also very clean as well. They make sure, when you first come here, you have obviously your bed and you have some food just in case you probably have nothing to eat or anything. They make sure you have something to make and drink and stuff like that, and you have like a fridge for, to bring, if you have your own stuff really and it's all quite, it's quite basic but it's quite clean and it's basically [you] have everything what you need at the same time. It's quite cool." (Perth and Kinross, female)

The availability of wi-fi internet was seen as very important to residents where they had it, and having **self-contained** rooms with en suite bathrooms and some kitchen facilities (as opposed to bedrooms and communal bathroom and/or kitchens) was strongly valued:

“[Particular hostel in Glasgow] was absolutely amazing. It was, again, your own wee self-contained flat. You had a microwave and a fridge, but you didn't have a cooker, or anything. You could go down and use the cooker that was shared, and the laundry down the stairs was shared, but you had your own walk-in shower room and toilet.” (Glasgow, female)

“out of the three [hostels] that I've been in, this is the best one so far. It's more calmer, more stable. It's still got its own wee hiccups, but just minor stuff... [you get] your own flat... You can chill in your room... It's funny, you feel more like you exist [than] in those other places. When you're sitting in a small room, you don't maybe feel comfortable or at home, whereas, here, we've got our own bedroom... it's just like having a flat, but secured entry.” (Dundee, male)

**Catering and provision of food** were also valued by some residents:

“at night-time, we've got bread and milk, and things like that for the rooms, if we need it. It's unbelievable.” (Edinburgh, male)

“You've got access to pretty much everything that you need kitchen-wise and food-wise and all the rest of it.” (Perth and Kinross, male)

For a small number of individuals catering within the hostels they'd stayed in had had significant health benefits:

“How I've came this last year, do you know what I mean? I've came on wonders, I've put three stone on, I used to be seven stone, do you know what I mean? I've came on wonders from this time last year” (East Ayrshire, mixed group)

“I was nine stone six when I come in here and now it's back up to just under 13” (Perth and Kinross, male)

On the flip side, some participants expressed a clear preference for hostels where there was **no service charge** (which tends to correspond with no catering or food provision):

“The [particular hostel in Dundee] was probably my best place, because... you didn't have to pay anything [i.e. a service charge].” (Dundee, male)

For some individuals with experience in hostels, the **social aspects of communal living** (albeit in tandem with having their own space) and solidarity with fellow residents were experienced as positive:

“You can sit in the TV room, you can make yourself a coffee, and that, because, it's kind of a flat that we've got up the stair. It's just basically like sharing a flat, that's what it's like in here. You're sharing a flat, but you've got a communal place that you have your lunch, and you go down to, here, they'll put the Sky TV on, and things like that. You can watch the football, and that kind of stuff.” (Edinburgh, male)

“there's people watching out for me and that in here. We all do look after each other and stuff – which is nice, because I've not had that for a while, not since I was... 16 or something” (Perth and Kinross, male)

The **location** of hostel accommodation appeared to be something particularly valued by those with experience of TA in more rural case study areas, as these two participants from

different hostels in Perth and Kinross highlight. They valued being near to relevant services and being able access a wide range of shops to save money:

“It's why I've stayed here because I've got stuff to go to at the [central location], like social work meetings and that, so it is pretty handy just being round the corner” (Perth and Kinross, male)

“We're so close to the town, obviously you can live a lot cheaper than if you were in the middle of the nowhere. You've got lots of different choices of shops. You can buy things here far cheaper than you would buy them anywhere else because you're so close to the town. I'd definitely say it's that for me, the best part of it, yes.” (Perth and Kinross, male)

This was also relevant to participants in East Ayrshire, some of whom had a very strong preference for hostel accommodation over temporary furnished flats given that the latter tended to be away from urban centres (see below).

An additional consideration highlighted by two men in a particular hostel in Glasgow was the **security** associated with staying in that hostel. For one man this related to concerns about threats from other people, with the ‘gatekeeping’ provided by hostel staff and entry systems reported as a comfort to those at risk. For the other participant, valuing the security aspects of the hostel related to their linked mental and physical health issues:

“See, it's good that way with the security here, just for some folk, you know, they might owe money. At least you know you're sleeping safe at night. It is a safe place, you know what I mean, to stay in.” (Glasgow, male)

“I do like the security of the doors, and all that, because I get anxiety attacks, and all that. It does give me peace of mind when I sleep” (Glasgow, male)

For this Dundee participant, living in his current hostel – and the presence of a support worker they referred to as “the bouncer” gatekeeping access – gave a different kind of security by creating distance from his usual ‘drinking associates’ and allowing him to better avoid what he described as the pull into his “alcoholic madness”:

“Actually it makes it easier because it's harder for drinking associates to keep me on that crazy bender.” (Dundee, male)

Stepping back from these specific components of hostel TA, a collection of other participants in the research expressed a more generalised positive orientation towards this kind of provision. Sometimes this seems to reflect relief that the hostel they accessed was nicer than they thought it would be; sometimes that hostel accommodation was seen to be far preferable to rough sleeping; and sometimes because hostel accommodation seemed to be the right option for that particular individual at the time they accessed it:

“I've been happy being here, you know? It was a lot more pleasant than I thought, because it was my first time. I didn't know what I was heading into. I came in here and it was nice, I thought it was nice. I got my room, I even gret all day, I was happy.” (Glasgow, male)

“I've slept under bridges in cardboard boxes but the hostel gives you a bit of dignity... The place is secure, you've got staff. You're not as vulnerable in here as what you would be if you were [on the streets]” (East Ayrshire, mixed group)

“it was just really good, because that's what I needed at the time. I needed a new start, and I've honestly been happy with it, basically. It's been what I needed at that point... it was just kind of supportive, and helpful, and I'm quietly getting on with what I was



supposed to do, and get settled, and get on... I'm actually quite positive about the whole thing." (Dundee, female)

### **Negative experiences of hostels**

The negatives of hostel-type TA closely mirror some of the negatives of B&B TA (in particular, restrictions on residents autonomy of various kinds and challenges associated with the other people living in hostels). It is also notable that some of the reasons hostel residents' quotes above cite as positive about this form of TA, residents quoted below see as negative (e.g. the 'social environment'). It is also very clear, once again, that the nature of hostel provision varies enormously, with some of the negative aspects of provision highlighted below, clearly not applicable in some of the units referred to in this section so far.

Those with experience in hostel accommodation cited a range of different **constraints on their autonomy** in such accommodation that they found difficult and challenging. This lack of control began with being offered a place in TA, something over which homeless households felt they had no control whatsoever:

"I got offered [particular hostel], or, if it wasn't [there], it was back on the streets, so I had to take it." (Dundee, male)

"I ended up with a phone call saying that there was a place here. I obviously didn't know what the place was at the time. I came down and I had to move in, I had no choice to move in. It just went from there... If I had refused it then they would have said well, you don't need it that bad." (East Lothian, female)

"I don't think there was a choice, but, certainly, they did make sure that there were no other problems that [I] might have, for example, I'm okay with a couple of steps... it was more or less like needs... as opposed to preferences." (Dundee, female)

Key limitations on autonomy during hostel stays were the explicit **rules** in place, including around having visitors and people in one's room, something that several participants felt interrupted their friendships, social life and relationships:

"That's another thing in here, we're not allowed anybody in our rooms, we're literally not allowed to have anybody with one foot in my door which you used to be allowed somebody in your room and I find that unfair." (East Ayrshire, female)

"there is a few rules, but you know I don't think they're suitable for people that are a wee bit older, you know like simple rules are kind of, people not staying overnight or be in this time, you have to be in a certain time or it counts as like a late pass or something. And just that they lock up like kitchens at certain times and... Apart from that, you know, I mean that's the only thing I really don't like. That's like that should be allowed for people that are, you know, 18 plus." (East Lothian, female)

"You're only allowed visitors, if they're non-residents here, it's only until nine o'clock at night, from 11 in the morning... I've had girlfriends since I've been homeless in the past year, and it's nothing but trouble. Nothing but bother. You just feel that you can't make time for them, and you can't get them to stay over. It's just hassle." (Dundee, male)

"you have to be home for a certain time, so it affects your life." (Dundee, male)

While some individuals reported flexibility or discretion around some of these rules some of the time e.g. explaining that "as long as you phone up and let them know you're staying out, it's fine" (Dundee, male), it was also clear to residents that breaching such rules could lead

to sanction (warnings and ultimately eviction): “if you get more than one warning, two or three warnings, then I think they would move you on” (Glasgow, female).

As was the case with B&B provision, a key area of dissatisfaction with hostel accommodation was having to rely on **shared or limited bathroom and kitchen facilities**:

“It’s in a wee block and... it’s shared toilets. There’s 100 people running about all the time” (Dundee, male)

“they shut the kitchen at quarter to eleven at night, I think the kitchen should be open but supervised through the night. When I wake up, I want to have something to eat and the kitchen’s locked” (East Ayrshire, mixed group)

“I don’t know if any of you have been in the [name of hostel]... I was in the basement in that one. You share a bathroom and a kitchen, and there’s just me and another person, and there wasn’t a shower, so you’re sharing a bath, you know what I mean? I just did not like it. Even the cooking, see if I didn’t want to get involved with the other person, it’s awkward trying to get something to eat. I just used to go into my room with it, but it was still awkward trying to dodge when she’s not in, or whatever.” (Glasgow, female)

“the facilities in the kitchens... [there’s] meant to be serving stuff in the kitchens but... There are no pots and pans and it’s hard to make stuff. People steal it and - yes. Like the kettles in here got stolen as well from the kitchen.” (Perth and Kinross, mixed group)

While some participants (see above) commented on the high quality of furniture, decoration or other aspects of the accommodation, others cited inadequate or uncomfortable furniture, poor quality internet, inadequate laundry facilities and poor quality building fabric:

“whenever you move into your flat, you know how most housing places give you nice beds, and that? I don’t understand why they give you metal beds for here, and not, like, they give you for, the housing, whenever you move in they give you the standard single bed? That would be a lot more comfier than them beds.” (Glasgow, female)

“the internet’s crap. Plus, we’re meant to be washing our clothes. What, for them to go fucking missing, and get ripped and all that, and end up with no clothes?” (Dundee, male)

“the walls are that thin in your room, I used to hear my next-door neighbour snoring. Honestly, I used to hear him snoring, and that’s annoying.” (Dundee, male)

In the case of catered hostels, residents had little **choice over food** times and the quality, type or amount of food on offer often didn’t suit everyone:

“I’m allergic to nuts, so I was paying rent there, paying for the food, but I wasn’t getting any food because they don’t know if it had nuts in it or not.” (Dundee, male)

“He made steak pie and I told him I don’t eat steak, so he went, ‘Well here’s tuna.’ ‘I don’t eat tuna’ He says, ‘Well you’ll have to starve then.’ I went up to my mums, I went, ‘Fuck it’.” (Dundee, male)

“I used to eat it and then think, I’m still starving”. (Dundee, male)

A particularly difficult restriction associated with hostel residents for a small group of those we spoke to related to not having opportunities to see their children, either because hostels would not allow children to visit (e.g. via provision of a family room) or because residents weren’t prepared to have their children visit them at the hostel they were staying in:

“The only thing I don’t like is I’ve got a bairn... and I can’t even get to see her because [you’re] not allowed bairns in the hostel.” (Dundee, male)

“[the best thing about leaving the hostel will be] just to get back to, I don't know, like, normality. Well, you can't really say that, normality, aye, just back to, obviously, seeing my wee boy, and things like that, [on a] regular basis, overnights, things like that. Whereas, here, I wouldn't bring my kid, obviously, near the place. I wouldn't even bring him out the front, know what I mean? It's just one of them things.” (Glasgow, male)

“I got put to [hostel], which was an absolute nightmare... Just folk banging into your doors or strangers and just the kind of people. My wee 14-year-old – well, she was 12 at that time – she wasn't allowed to come in the place. I told the council that I had a daughter who I had 50 per cent access to... Finally we done a phone consultation; she agreed to it and I asked her why she put me in there, because I had a child. She said – what was it? – she didn't, I think it was like she didn't, she had forgot or something like that or she didn't remember.” (Perth and Kinross, male)

This last participant had subsequently got moved to another hostel, which he preferred (“you don't get your door bashed in”) but was still unsuitable for his daughter to visit.

A central key theme underpinning residents' negative views on this kind of TA was the **congregate and communal** nature of hostels and the **social challenges** associated with this. Once again, this aspect of hostel provision undermined people's autonomy and capacity to control their own environment. For some, this was a matter of feeling uncomfortable, awkward or ill at ease living at such close quarters with others, or being disturbed by noise:

“it can be quite difficult when you know you're living with other people, it's loads of other people as well. There's a lot of tension that goes around the house. It makes it harder” (East Lothian, female)

“you obviously have other people living here as well, so it's very... socially very awkward and stuff like that as well. You don't have to speak to anyone or, you can just keep to yourself but at the same time if you're using the kitchen, for example, and someone can walk in randomly, and it's like, I don't know if they want to spark a conversation or just do nothing, or whatever.... I'd probably want to wait for them to just go because, I'm just awkward really and I don't really want to disturb that person” (Perth and Kinross, female)

“The alarm goes off, the smoke alarm goes off three times a night” (Dundee, male)

For others the stakes were very high indeed, and living in such a congregate environment was associated with **dangers to safety and health, and/or greater risks of being involved in criminal activity and/or breaches of rules that led to eviction**:

“Cunts wanted to put needles in my neck, man.” (Dundee, male)

“when I went to [hostel in Glasgow], I was doing well, right? Then they moved me on to [other hostel], and that's like supported accommodation, but I ended up, I got mixed up with somebody that was selling Valium in there, and I took Valium one time in there, and he got pulled by the police. The police came and kicked him out, and because I was with him, I got kicked out, so that's what ended me up in the street” (Glasgow, female)

Reflecting this range of issues with much hostel provision, participants often cited residing in this type of TA as having **negative impacts on their mental health**:

“my depression and anxiety got a lot worse whenever I first came in here” (Glasgow, male)

“everybody in here's depressed, because we're all... You feel trapped. There's a lot of people that don't make it. They turn to drugs, they end up killing themselves. The long process is what drains people.” (Dundee, male)

“For me, I've got depression and anxiety, and that stuff, and doing nothing, and not working gets to me more. Even when I was working, I was going to college and having a job at the same time, and having a wee house, and I felt great. It made me feel part of society, it made me feel like I could do something, but, being in here... you can't work, and if you do work you're going to have to pay all that money to something you're not even getting the benefit from” (Dundee, male)

As this last quote anticipates, the **barriers associated with accessing employment** when in TA (see chapter 4) were a key negative associated with hostels for those ready and able to work:

“If I was able to work while I was here, that would have made a difference... I've been offered three jobs since I've been here and I couldn't take any of them... I've looked for work, and I've been offered jobs. I've got a mate what was working in the bingo, and I was fully qualified to work in the kitchen with my cooking skills, but, I came back all happy, thinking, yes, I'm going to start working, and it'll get me out of here, and all that, then [name of support worker] was like that, 'No. If you do, you would have to pay £280 a week” (Dundee, male)

“I've worked for the past ten years doing security at the music festivals, I couldn't do it this year because I've been in here.” (East Ayrshire, mixed group)

Only one hostel resident in the sample reported being aware of any discretion over rent levels for those accessing employment: “If you do work, though, they do some sort of deal with you... [but] it's still quite expensive” (East Ayrshire, male).

While some participants in this report pointed to the staff within hostels as a positive and valuable resource and support, this experience wasn't by any means universal. Other participants reported **negative experiences with staff** (both support and wider staff), including judgemental attitudes, not responding to issues as they arise, overburdened staff without the time to adequately support residents despite the best of intentions, and inconsistency of staff:

“see some of the staff here, they're judgemental on you. It depends what mood they're in and what's going on in their life. Sometimes the night staff, me, personally, I don't like the night staff. I don't like them, they're quite snidey” (Dundee, male)

“If somebody does spit in your food, they'll not give you another... You'll go, 'Here, he's just spat in my food, can I get another?' 'No'. They'll not give you it.” (Dundee, male)

“[name of hostel], the staff are great there, but they're just overrun. There's 33 people, 32 people living there. Most of the time it's 12-hour shifts they do, and most of the time it's only two staff on at a time” (Dundee, male)

“when you're in the hostel you have a keyworker, and... When I stayed there, they had a changeover of staff, so all the staff I know, that I connected with, have all moved on. I don't like getting a new person and having to explain to them my full situation, what's going on.” (Glasgow, female)

Finally, some hostel residents were simply **ready to move on** from such accommodation. For some, this was a matter of getting their own space, free from some of the challenges above and ‘getting on with life’. For others it was a more serious issue given some of the

pressures and challenges noted above. These participants did emphasise, however, the importance of having 'things in place' (support, furniture, income, etc.) in settled move on accommodation (whether a temporary furnished flat or a settled tenancy):

"The timescale is too long. Some people do stupid things because they can't wait any longer. They end up back in prison, then back to square one. It's just too long. It's far too long a process." (Dundee, male)

"Me, personally, I would have been happy if they'd put me in a flat [rather than a hostel]" (Dundee, male)

"I'm okay in my own space, so I'm looking forward to moving on, taking that next step, but you need to have things in place before you leave, you know? Obviously, it's still going to be strange, coming from a house full of guys, and all that, going in somewhere yourself." (Edinburgh, male)

### **Temporary furnished flats**

The individuals we spoke to with current or recent experience in temporary furnished flats reported had a broadly even split of positive and negative perspectives on this form of TA. These positive and negatives were invariably of a qualitatively different kind to those experienced in others forms of TA (hostels and B&B). For the most part, they reflected the pros and cons of the allocated house (its location, repair, suitability etc.) as would be the case for a normal housing allocation, rather than the specific factors associated with experiences of hostel and B&B (their congregate nature, rules and regulations etc).

#### ***Positive experiences of temporary furnished flats***

A number of the temporary furnished flat residents we spoke to were very positive about their TA. These positive experiences related to a variety of features about the property: that it was a '**nice**' or '**lovely**' flat that had **everything they needed** when they moved in; that it had **particular features they valued** (a 'wee garden' or a 'good sized kitchen/bathroom'); or that they had stayed there some time, were **used to it** and would find it 'quite hard' to move:

"It is lovely, we have a balcony where we have 3 pots of flowers, we like having outdoor space, we have nice neighbours as well." (Perth and Kinross, female with children)

"the flat inside is lovely. You know what I mean? Here, you don't need anything when you walk in... You could come in here at midnight with your kids. Do you know what I mean?" (Dundee, female with children)

"It's got a wee garden out your front window and trees and things like that so it's nice to look out of it. It's secure as well. It is just the one room, apart from there's a good-sized kitchen and good-sized bathroom. You don't really see anybody, but it's nice to look out of it." (East Ayrshire, male)

Several participants emphasised that they were pleased with the **location** of their temporary furnished flat, in particular when their accommodation was close to friends and family or amenities:

"It's close to a shopping centre, and a couple of shops, and one of my best friends actually stays minutes across the road from me. He's across every day, so, I've always got company." (East Lothian, female)

"The location's great. It's all families in it anyway." (Dundee, female)

“when we want to visit people, we could go around and visit anyone... the school is not that far. The city centre is just right there, so, any bus you want to... take, you could take it from there. Yes, it's just a lot of amazing things, just a perfect location” (Glasgow, male)

This participant gives a longer account of her year in a temporary furnished flat, highlighting the good location of the flat she was allocated, the **mixed but on balance ok block** she was in, the **helpful concierge**, and the **management of the building**:

“It was in a fantastic location and the concierge of the building I still speak to now and he was so lovely, he was so helpful. The neighbours were lovely. There was obviously a few crazy people in there as in a few anti-social people, but generally the overwhelming majority of people there had been there for a long time... it was a really good mix and it was a really great location. So I was able to spin it to the kids that, you know, 'Look how lucky we are? Look, Arthur's Seat is now our garden', and they loved it, there was a play park along the road, so as far as temporary accommodation went, from that aspect it was brilliant... I was really, really impressed with the council's management of the buildings. I was so impressed with how clean they were, how well looked after they were. There was little communities in there and I was really impressed with that, really quite enjoyed living there. I don't think there's probably many people that say that they enjoyed their temporary accommodation, but I really did and, like I said, I felt safe. There was a couple of dodgy occasions, but apart from that it was generally, you know, I'm pretty resilient, so it was fine.” (Edinburgh, female with children)

What is quite striking about these comments is the extent to which they illustrate the relative **‘normality’** of living in a temporary furnished flat compared to hostel or B&B accommodation. This is a theme made explicit by several participants who had previously spent time in hostel accommodation. This man from East Lothian, for example, previously in hostel accommodation and before that in prison, explains the substantial gains in **autonomy**, **social integration** and **relationships** with his family, including his daughter, that were associated with getting his own self-contained temporary home:

“obviously from being in prison coming outside and then going to the hostel and that, going into temporary accommodation [TFF] has definitely made things a lot easier, because when you've got your own front and back door, which is a big thing, you can come and go as you please. There's people round about you that you can talk to... I think it's definitely improved things, and as I have said already, yes, the social aspect with my family and that being able to visit. Whereas when they come to visit you in the hostel, basically, all you can do is go and sit in the car somewhere to have a bag of crisps or a McDonald's or something. No, it's definitely better that way.... You're not allowed people to come in the hostel and things like that, and it's not really a place you want to have your daughter waiting outside for you when you see the clientele that are in the hostel. So that restricted it, but when they moved me into my first temporary accommodation [TFF], that opened the doors because they could come up and sit with me, watch TV, have their dinner with me and do things like that.” (East Ayrshire, male)

Similarly, this woman explains that she prefers her current temporary flat to the young people's accommodation unit she previously stayed in:

“Aye, it is better living here [than in the supported hostel accommodation], because I've got my own space. This is practically like your own house. I'm in my flat, I get all my support, and stuff like that. Aye, it is easier that way” (Glasgow, female)

Such a sentiment was also expressed by this current hostel resident, who had had previous experience in a temporary furnished flat. She explained that it was the best experience in TA she had had, primarily because she was 'left to her own devices' (albeit with support coming in every week), but also because of the good location and quality of the accommodation:

"I actually got on alright with that. I got on better with that than I did anywhere else... I think it was because I got left to my own devices. I had to do what I had to do... I had to make sure I had the electricity, I had to make sure that I had... The house was amazing. There was no bedrooms in it, it was just a living room, kitchen and toilet, but my kitchen was a beautiful big, built-in kitchen with a big breakfast bar, and all that, and then there was a wee kind of alcove bit where I could put my double bed. Then there was a big, ginormous living room. Oh, it was amazing... Everything. Where it was... and the interior was just absolutely amazing" (Glasgow, female)

### **Negative experiences of temporary furnished flats**

Stays in temporary furnished flats were certainly not always positive however. As was the case for those in other forms of TA, TFF residents tended to report having **no choice or control** at the point of allocation:

"That's all they had available. They offered me a one-bedroom in a horrendous area or this two bedroom in a horrendous area!... You don't get any preferences. You don't get any choices." (Dundee, female with children)

"Basically, the last day [when we became roofless], that was available and that's what I got. I didn't have the choice to say yes or no to that. I had to say yes because I had to live in a car... there was no other option for us and we had to take whatever" (East Lothian, male with children)

"I wasn't able to say. I had to just take what they could give us." (Dundee, female with children)

The most acute problems were faced by those who had been allocated an **unsuitable temporary furnished flat**, that **didn't meet their fundamental needs** in some way, for instance because it was **too small** or **very badly located** for specific reasons. This was not uncommon in our sample. One family of five, for instance, (mum, dad and three children) had been staying in a two bedroomed flat for five months:

"The three kids: they do need their bed, they do need to play about, and there's not much space for all that. Like I said before, we don't really have a choice, so we've got to live in it" (East Lothian, male with children)

A family in Dundee (mum, daughter and grown up son) were staying in a two bedroomed third floor flat with mother and daughter sharing a bed, despite the mother's severe health problems. This collection of issues have worsened the mother's physical and mental health and meant she's had to stop working:

"I don't like the fact there's only two bedrooms. I'm having to share with my 13-year-old daughter... I hate it. I have been on the phone... I'm also – and the council know it – suffering from [anonymised serious long term health issue], and they've put me three floors up... I suffer from depression anyway so it's not helped me. I feel like a prisoner stuck up here... I can't go and have an early night. Actually, I can't go to bed until she's in bed, if you know what I mean. She's watching her TV, playing a game on her computer or whatever. You can't have a long lie at the weekend because she's up...

The stairs have had a major impact on my health. Actually, I work part-time in a shop and I've been off my work for three months because of a chest infection with my [long term health issue]. I actually wasn't out of the house for three weeks" (Dundee, female with children)

This family also had to give up their pets (dogs and cats) because the occupancy agreement prohibits it: "in distinctly massive bold writing it tells you no pets on the property or you'll be evicted". A family in East Lothian had stayed in two temporary flats, one PSL, one local authority, both of which were seen as patently unsuitable, in the first case due to being so close to a noisy pub, and the second because of the location combined with the daughter's health needs. The participant explains:

"they put us in a PSL, [name of PSL provider] home next to a pub. When I first went to view it, I said to them, 'This isn't acceptable', and I said to them about the kitchen because of my daughter's [anonymised health need requiring particular diet], the kitchen was like a box, small as a toilet, and they kept telling me, 'Well, this is all we've got. If you don't take this, then we're not housing [you] now. There is nowhere else. You have to take it'. I had to take it, I never had the choice, so I went into there and then within about three weeks of being there it was ridiculous; the pub, people banging on the kids' windows. I went to the council and none of them would listen to me. It was an actual joke. Eventually the MP got me moved... [the current TFF is] nowhere near the kids' schools. It's nowhere near – my daughter obviously I'm her full-time carer... if anything happens I need to be at the school and I need to get there fast... The school is far away, and they put on taxis for [daughter's name] and [son's name] at first, and not now... it's not safe for her to get the bus from where we are by herself to school, because if she [becomes unwell], or anything happens, who's going to help her?" (East Lothian, female with children)

This participant had been signed off sick due to stress soon after moving into TA, and had tried to return but not yet been able to. For other households, the unsuitability of their temporary accommodation was less acute, but they were still **unhappy with the location or specific neighbourhood** they were staying in, either because in their view it was unsafe or unpleasant (a 'bad' area) in which they weren't welcome, or because it was far from their friends and family and/or services they needed to access:

"It's a bad area. I've spoken to people and they're like, 'Oh my God, I can't believe you're staying there.'" (Dundee, female with children)

"I feel better within myself [having accessed settled housing], because I was getting awfully depressed up there [in previous TFF]. Oh, I didn't like I there. The grandson, I think he was getting depressed, because, with it being away up there, he lost touch with his friends, and things like that... I lost touch with my friends, and that, because you were about three-quarters-of-an-hour on the bus, and it was bus money, and things like that. You had to watch what you were doing." (Dundee, female with children)

"the locations are just diabolic... 'The only place we've got is [part of East Ayrshire]', and it's 36 miles away, do you know what I mean?... I think if they were in places where like [other settlement in East Ayrshire]... we would prefer them to this place [hostel]. But because they're putting us away in the middle of nowhere and like I said, the people that are from there don't like strangers coming in and getting put in a temporary accommodation because they're wondering why they're in there and where they're from. Or all the rest of it, do you know what I mean? (East Ayrshire, female)



This last participant explained her preference for staying in a hostel rather than a TFF 'in the middle of nowhere' because it was easier for her to access the Jobcentre, her doctors and be closer to her children.

In addition to (and sometimes in combination with) these issues of suitability and location, the **length of time** people had been in temporary furnished flats, was a major negative expressed by those in this form of TA:

"You aren't supposed to have these flats long, but. This is just a stepping-stone until you get your own flat, and I've been here for pure ages... It's absolutely ridiculous. I'm pure moaning at my social worker, moaning at people all the time, saying, 'When am I going to get my own house?' They've done all they need to do, so, it's just up [to] the housing to see where they can get me a place" (Glasgow, female)

"I think there should be a set time limit that people are only kept in homeless that time, not any longer than that time. If they cannot find a house, they should let them keep their homeless accommodation... Really... Give me a house now! Give me one of the derelict ones and I'll fix it myself! I told them that too before. I said, 'Just give me one of them and I'll fix it for you'.... I need to be in accommodation, so I can make these things happen. It's over two years now. I get like over a year, I get that, there are no houses, I understand our society is pushing, it's squashed as much as it can, but two years..." (East Lothian, female with children)

"I think it's a bit too long because as I say it's not really home. The kids are getting settled and that and you sort of think you're getting settled and you've got to move them again" (Dundee, female with children)

As these comments begin to suggest, key issues underpinning people's unhappiness with the length of time they'd been in temporary furnished flats were the **uncertainty** around when they would be moving on and consequent **feelings of being 'in limbo'** and **lacking any control over the situation**:

"it's quite depressing because although you're in a furnished flat, you can't start unpacking your personal items because you don't know how long you're going to be here. Now, if they said to me, 'We cannot give you anything for a year,' I would let my daughter unpack - the youngest. I'd let her put some posters up. I'd let her get her personal knick-knacks and things out, but I could get a letter any day saying... So is there any point feeling settled? It's hard to describe. It's like you're not properly settled...you just want to make it homely. You know? If I was on my own, it wouldn't be so bad, but I feel for the kids. You want to make them a home and you just can't. The more you unpack the more you're going to have to repack." (Dundee, female with children)

"I think it was too long... because of the uncertainty and the problem that that creates for people. Your life, you're in limbo and there's actually [only] so long that people can live in limbo without it really damaging their mental health. Even the strongest person, the most resilient person, without any pre-existing challenges or anxieties, that then becomes because you don't know and nobody likes to not know what's happening... you're on edge... even just a simple thing like packing: do I pack now?... it was just that uncertainty. I don't think uncertainty probably does it justice as to how insecure you can feel... at that particular moment in time I couldn't do anything about it. My circumstances meant that I was completely beholden and at the mercy of the whole process" (Edinburgh, female with children)

Despite this stress, something that had made a significant difference to this last participant's experience was having ongoing access to and a positive relationship with her case worker. She explained that she had the caseworkers email address and could always ask to speak to her by phone if she wanted to. This seemed to make a big difference to how 'humane' she found the experience and to feelings of autonomy and control over the situation in challenging circumstances:

"she was really good. I mean there were times where I spent 40 minutes on the phone with her, and she was lovely... I think that's actually what made... the positive aspects of my experience and the sort of more controllable aspects of my experience... the fact that I had a constant. You weren't being passed, it wasn't a call centre or anything like that and I think that makes it a much more humane experience" (Edinburgh, female with children)

A particular impact of this uncertainty and the temporary nature of the tenancy was that TA residents were **unable to 'make the place their own'**:

"obviously, I don't want to stay in this flat for the rest of my life. It's not the nicest... Well, it is a decent size, so it is. These flats are quite big, so they are, and I quite like a load of space, so that's the only thing good about it. See if I could have this flat, and do it up myself..." (Glasgow, female)

"it's just annoying that you can't put your own touch on it... you're sort of worried saying, you can't do this and you can't do that. We've not unpacked everything because you think, well we've got to move again. So there's a lot of stuff that's not unpacked and things" (Dundee, female with children)

These dynamics were particularly acute for families with children. While parents tended to think they could cope with restrictions – and associated impacts – of living in a temporary home, they tended to be **extremely concerned and sometimes distressed about the impact it was having on their children**, both in terms of their general wellbeing, and sense of home and stability, but also in some cases more specifically children's ability to play and have fun, their attendance and performance at school, and feelings of stigma. Impacts on children's wellbeing were present across the sample of families with children, but were most acute where the TA families were living in was seen to be unsuitable:

"12-18 months is quite a long time for to be in a temp accommodation when you don't know what's going to happen... it's put stress on all of us. Obviously like, the boys kind of had freedom when we lived in our previous address. They were allowed to go out and play and stuff like that, but it's just like kind of stuck in the house all the time. They feel like they're not allowed to do anything... It's not as if they've got anywhere to go out and play. Like, we're six floors up. So it's affected all of us really, really badly. All they keep saying is, 'This isn't our house. When are we going to get a new house?' and that's all I've heard for the last 17 months. So it's really, really difficult. As I say to everyone, it would be fine if it was myself, but because kids are involved in it as well, it's a big, big impact on them." (Edinburgh, female with children)

"Her [participant's daughter] attendance was 100 per cent, she was at school every single day, we came down here, she was at the school, I told them about the pub, she was getting sent home from school almost every single day because she was falling asleep in class because the pub was keeping her awake until 1:00/2:00 in the morning... My daughter didn't self-harm, and I know children grow up and things happen, and things change, and it could have happened anyway, but I believe this is all due to my long-term homeless. They've had to move three houses, and stay at my

sister's, so that's four houses in two years... my kids are saying they're hobos because they live in a homeless [house] and they've lived in it for two years - hobos!" (East Lothian, female with children)

"my daughter won't go out because across the road from us... that is where all the youngsters congregate constantly. So my 13-year-old won't go out as they're from a different school from her. She's not from this scheme, if you know what I mean. So she's frightened to go past them as they hurl abuse at her. So that's had an impact on her, not being in the scheme she grew up in. I don't know about other cities but they're very territorial in Dundee" (Dundee, female with children)

For this last participant, the location of their TFF was a key area of stress, with the mother reporting issues of anti-social behaviour and drug use within the stair as well as issues outside the building. In this context, the hope of securing a settled tenancy in a better area was extremely important, but they reported having been pressured to seek accommodation in 'rough' parts of the city they didn't want to live in.

"I was very angry last week. You have a homeless officer that comes to see you once a month. She came to see me and said that if I didn't change the areas I pick I'll be here forever. She tried to get me to pick this area that I know is one of the roughest parts of Dundee. She was really pressuring me to take it and when I mentioned it to the Anti-Social lady, she just said, 'Do not go there.' I thought, well, that's your homeless officer. She's meant to be looking out for your welfare." (Dundee, female with children)

The impacts of being 'in limbo' described above were certainly not restricted to families with children or those in TA that was for some clear reason unsuitable. This 19 year old young woman had been in a TFF for nearly two years after a stay in a young person's supported hostel and explains the manifold impacts of the situation on her life, despite the flat being broadly suitable for her in terms of location, size and being self-contained. The key themes were the impact of being in TA on her ability to enter work, in that context her very low income, and the knock-on impact of these things on her ability to socialise and maintain relationships with friends. All this was exacerbated by her long length of stay in the temporary flat. As a result, her living situation had **heavy impacts on her levels of stress and mental wellbeing**:

"Honestly, it's not great. I still get dead stressed out, and all that, about it... It's just like, everything just takes time, and everything's just a pure waiting game. It's stressful, you get really annoyed with it all. You need to obviously try and stay calm, but it's really hard... The course that I'm starting, it's like a five, six-week course, and at the end of it you get an interview... so you may get the chance to get a job at the end of this, and I'm saying to all these people, 'If I do this course and I get an interview, would they take me on for a job, or am I just supposed to say, no, I can't do it because, obviously, I'm stuck in this flat?' I'd be passing up a good opportunity... I would probably have a job, and all that, just now [if I wasn't in TA]. My life would just be so much easier. I'd get a job, I'd be able to go and do things. Like, all my pals are going on holiday, and stuff like that, and I can't do anything like that. I can't even think about anything like that, because I just don't get enough [money] for that. I'd have extra money, and I could do things that I want to do, do you know what I'm talking about? I wouldn't be stuck in the house all the time... all my pals are wanting to go and do this, and do that, and they're like that, 'What are you doing? You're being a pure bore, you're not coming to anything.' I was like that, 'Look, I would love to come everywhere with you, I'd love to go to [holiday destination abroad], I'd love to go to movies, but I can't do that. I just don't get enough money for it'. They're like that, 'Go and get a job', and I'm like that, 'I can't get a

job. My rent's pure sky-high. If I got a job I would probably have less money'. So, it's depressing." (Glasgow, female)

As this young women's perspective makes clear, the **work disincentive effects** associated with living in TA clearly articulated by local informants in chapter 4, were clearly present in our interviews with TA residents:

"Do you know? It's like I could be working. I could be achieving things in life and I'm not... I always went to college. I done volunteering... I've always done stuff. My kids have always seen me doing stuff. For the past year and a bit, I've not done anything." (East Lothian, male with children)

"I'm hoping to try and get back to work, and, they've actually advised me, if I want to go for a job just now, I'm better getting a part-time job, because of my circumstances just now." (East Lothian, female with children)

For this young man living with his parents and large family in TA, the relevant impact was less being able to access employment, and more the result of living in **poverty**:

"I would say it's quite hard, like, to hang out with friends a lot, because money's kind of a problem right now... Yes, so, hanging out with friends, and, just in general, having fun. Like, going to a cinema, or doing stuff like that, it's quite hard. It's not that easy, yes." (Glasgow, male)

The spread of weekly charges reported in chapter 4 make clear that some LAs have found ways to charge 'normal' rent levels in TA, something that would undoubtedly ease some of the challenges and stresses reported here by TA residents.

A further key issue and source of dissatisfaction for some of those in temporary furnished flats was that of **property quality** at point of move in and subsequent **repairs services**. A number of participants described multiple and sometimes quite serious issues with their accommodation (damp throughout the property, doors hanging off, internal locks not working, broken boilers, plug sockets hanging off the wall) and lack of responsiveness from the local authority repairs team:

"I would say multiple times, like, two or three times, that heaters stopped working, and, yes, it take ages to get fixed. Yes, it was the boiler. I don't know what happened to it, it stops working, and to exchange it, it took a lot of time." (Glasgow, male)

"Like, the house, it's got damp. It's got repairs that need done everywhere. The council just, they don't do anything. Well, there's quite a lot of damp, and then you've got plug sockets hanging off walls, and then you've got a radiator hanging off a wall. My living room door, that's off the hinges. That was hanging on with one hinge. It's now off like the two hinges, and lying up against my living room wall. You phone them, 'Right, well we'll put that in for repair' and you just wait and wait and wait. Or you phone them back and say, 'Oh, this repair was done last month. Why has there still not been anybody out to do it?' 'Oh, there was somebody out at your property, but there was no answer'. This is all you get." (Edinburgh, female with children)

"when I moved, in there was no skirting, or anything, on it, and my bedroom door-handle was hanging off and it's still not been fixed yet... It wasn't really decorated, there wasn't really much in it... I'm pure sick of the sight of it, so I am, and see... if I break something, for them to fix it, like, my door handle's broken on my bedroom door, and I've been asking for pure months and months for them to fix it, and they've not fixed it. See, like, when the door shuts, you actually need to use a butter knife to get the lock off

it, and I just think, what if I put something in the oven and I get locked in my room, and my phone's out there as well, what am I supposed to do?" (Glasgow, female)

For some households, there were less serious but still significant issues concerning the **cleanliness or decorative order** of a TFF, or the equipment available within it to keep it clean:

"I've stayed in a few [TFFs] and sometimes you get in them and they're absolutely disgusting and you've got to scrub them, you would scrub it anyway but they're absolutely disgusting... that house in [part of East Ayrshire], the couch had black on it... that was disgusting. Then the bed had a hole that size in it, it was a hole that size in a double bed in the rubber... Sometimes you could be walking into an awful dump but you've got no option but to stay in it." (East Ayrshire, female)

"I've decorated mine. Mine is decorated. I've painted it and everything because it was that bad. I was just thinking my kids cannot live like this any more. The kids were going let's just whitewash. Everything is just white. There are white walls, 'I'm sick of white walls, mum. It's making me feel sad', so... I painted both of my kids' rooms " (East Lothian, female with children)

"Apparently, a Hoover is a luxury item so you don't get a Hoover!" (Dundee, female with children)

## Conclusion

There is substantial diversity of experiences of and views regarding each of the major kinds of TA. It is certainly not the case that temporary furnished flats, hostels or B&Bs are universally experienced as good or bad, suitable or unsuitable. Each form of TA comes with its own specific associated benefits and disbenefits. B&Bs were associated with the most consistently negative experiences relating to: the presence of rules and absence of facilities that substantially restricted residents' autonomy; the lack of support and caring environment; and issues associated with congregate nature of B&Bs, specifically being in an environment where conflict, anti-social behaviour and substance misuse could be common. Some people, however, had stayed in B&Bs that were well-equipped and managed and free from many of these social environment issues. Others reported valuing the location of B&Bs they had stayed in given their proximity to friends, family, services and/or amenities. Several people we spoke had been entirely satisfied with their B&B accommodation, with one individual expressing a strong preference for such accommodation rather than hostels.

The balance of positive and negative experiences was more even in the case of hostel accommodation. On the positive side, many hostel residents reported valuing the support available with attending appointments, accessing services, beginning to address mental health problems as well as more general emotional support. Some people described hostels they'd stayed in as comfortable, clean and well appointed with appropriate facilities, with the location of some hostels also a positive aspect for some. Wifi facilities and more self-contained accommodation with en suites and kitchen facilities were especially valued, although a small number people reported health benefits associated with catered hostels. A small number also reported valuing the social aspects of congregate living and the 'security' they felt in being in an environment where entry was policed by staff, but much more commonly people with experience in hostels saw these congregate environments as coming with serious disbenefits similar to those reported in B&B accommodation, ranging from awkwardness around sharing facilities to much more severe issues of safety and exposure to criminal and other negative behaviours. Staff were not universally supportive in

hostels. Also like B&Bs, living in hostels generally radically constrained people's autonomy and control over their environment, given rules and established routines. It also restricted people's ability to enter work. All these issues were exacerbated where people stayed in hostels for long periods and where buildings and rooms were not kept clean or were in a poor state of repair. An extremely important problem for a subset of those living in hostels was the difficulty it posed in relation to seeing their children. In combination, these issues could have profoundly negative impacts on individuals' mental health.

Temporary furnished flats were valued for the relative 'normality' they afforded people. Many TFF residents reported liking the flat or house itself and that accommodation had everything they needed. Residents particularly valued TFFs that were well located in relation to friends, family, services and/or amenities. Those who had previous experience in hostels or B&Bs experienced substantial improvements in their wellbeing in TFFs associated with having greater autonomy and improved family relationships. But negative experiences were also common in TFFs. Like others in TA, people reported having no choice at the point at which the accommodation was allocated. Some had been given accommodation that was radically unsuitable for their needs, and as a result were heavily overcrowded, experienced deteriorations in their health and/or very high levels of stress. Being accommodated in an area the household didn't like or which isolated them from friends and family was fairly common.

Despite the relative 'normality' of TFFs, long lengths of stay in this kind of TA were still experienced as profoundly negative given the enduring uncertainty over where they would end up and feelings of being 'in limbo' and lacking any control over their (and their families) lives and future. Not being able to make the place their own (because of rules or a sense that there was no point) compounded these feelings. The impact on children of 'being homeless' in terms of stigma, lacking a sense of home and stability, not having adequate space, being far away from school, friends and family were a source of considerably distress for parents, and most reported negative impacts on children's wellbeing and mental health. Like other forms of TA, living in TFFs made accessing work difficult. Living in poverty and being unable work negatively effected people's wellbeing, and parent's sense of being a good role model for their children. It also led to boredom and isolation from friends, and locked young people out of the labour market at a time they felt they needed to be building their skills. A whole suite of negative experiences surrounded the physical quality of some TFFs at the point of move on and the unresponsiveness of some local authorities repairs services.

A number of common themes across all types of TA emerge from this analysis that are instructive in improving the quality of such accommodation, and better matching individuals to specific placements where possible. First, location matters. TA residents strongly valued TA that was near friends and family, as well as key amenities and services (schools, doctors, jobcentres etc.). In some cases, being located in these significantly compensated for other drawbacks of the TA in question. Second, all forms of TA were associated with restrictions to people's autonomy and sense of control over their immediate environment and lives in general, with significant impacts on people's wellbeing and mental health. In hostels and B&Bs, core to this lack of autonomy were rules and routines according to which the congregate accommodation was run, or a lack of facilities that enabled people to do what they wanted (eat, do laundry, use the internet etc.) when they wanted to. These kinds of restrictions were almost entirely absent in self-contained TFFs (though there were some e.g. prohibitions of pet ownership in occupancy agreements). In the absence of such restrictions, another element of diminished autonomy came to the fore (one perhaps present but largely overshadowed in hostels and B&Bs), relating to the uncertainty of how

long households would be in such accommodation and where they would end up. All of these issues were exacerbated by longer lengths of stay, a concern for those living in all types of TA.

Other themes are specific to particular kinds of accommodation, two of which are highlighted here. First, only hostels and B&Bs are associated with the raft of challenges linked with their congregate nature, ranging from feelings of awkwardness and being ill at ease, through to more profound impacts on wellbeing and mental health, personal safety, criminal behaviour and substance misuse. Second, concerns related to the wellbeing of children were primarily confined to those living in TFFs. Households with children in our sample who had been in B&B accommodation had only been so for a short duration. Concerns about children in TFFs, however, could be severe where the accommodation families were staying in was radically unsuitable for their needs, including examples where children were sharing beds with parents or siblings. Children were also not immune to the constraints on autonomy imposed on those in TA (sometimes unable to go out and play, socialise with friends or personalise their rooms), and were according to some parents particularly susceptible to the stigma associated with 'being homeless'. Some single people staying in hostel accommodation, however, did have children (although were not their sole carer) and being in this form of TA vastly restricted their abilities to see their children.

A key distinction to be drawn from the analysis in this chapter is that some negative experiences in TA reflect *intrinsic* characteristics of the TA in question – and thus unavoidable where that type of accommodation is used, while others are *extrinsic* and thus – at least in principle – fixable. Issues of cleanliness, state of remain, facilities, length of stay and even location can be changed across B&B, hostel and TFF accommodation, albeit that they carry resource implications. Intrinsic however to the nature of hostel and B&B accommodation is its congregate nature. As well as this congregate living environment itself being a source of negative experience for many of the people we spoke to, it is perhaps this congregate aspects of the accommodation that requires some of the rules and routines described by participants as reducing their autonomy and wellbeing. Some of these rules and routines may be amendable to change (and serious consideration should be given to doing so), but others may be essential to the running of such blocks of accommodation to reduce risk and ensure safety, especially where hostels are larger and/or have lower staff/resident ratios. All of the issues associated with negative experiences in TFF accommodation are extrinsic, other than the uncertainty and sometimes distress associated with being 'in limbo', given that this is essentially 'normal' (albeit temporary) housing. Even this sense of being in limbo, however, could be reduced by efforts to reduce the length of time households stay in TA and enhance their control and knowledge of when they will move on and where to.

## 7. Transforming temporary accommodation in Scotland

This final substantive chapter starts from recognition that the present study was undertaken during a period of rapid policy change in the Scottish homelessness context. The local case studies thus offered an opportunity to explore the perspectives of those working in the homelessness and temporary accommodation sector on these changes. In particular, the chapter will focus on local informants' views on the recommendations of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group, particularly those pertaining to TA, and the current shift to rapid-rehousing responses to homelessness being pursued via Rapid Rehousing Transition plans due to submitted to Scottish Government in December 2018. Before considering this set of themes however, the next section focuses on locally-led transformations in homelessness responses and TA provision already underway in a number of the case study areas.

### Local authority-led temporary accommodation transformation

Local authorities are required to develop Local Housing Strategies every five years which include an assessment of the extent and nature of homelessness in the area and a strategy for its prevention and alleviation. As such, TA provision is reviewed in all local authorities in line with this requirement. Moreover, all local authorities involved in this study reported that they had made changes to how TA is provided and managed in recent years and were considering further changes in the future.

For example, East Lothian has committed to undertaking a 'whole systems' review of TA in their recently published Local Housing Strategy, covering "the efficiency and effectiveness of temporary accommodation usage and processes" and including the exploration of "innovative/alternative forms of accommodation (including hostel provision)"<sup>92</sup>. The strategy also indicates that East Lothian will move more units of mainstream local authority housing into use as TA, explore acquiring more TA from housing associations, and seek to increase the supply of TA for larger families.

As noted in chapter 4, East Ayrshire have radically increased their portfolio of social sector TA over several years, and sought to improve the support offered to those in TA over the lifetime of their 2013-18 Local Housing Strategy<sup>93</sup>. Local informants interviewed for this study also outlined wider transformations underway within the local authority that will influence homelessness services, including increasing staffing (in particular the numbers of TA support officers) and moving to a 'neighbourhood coach' (rather than housing officer) model, based on smaller patches enabling closer relationships with tenants. The local authority is also reviewing spending across the board with a view to making cost savings, which is anticipated to impact on the homelessness service, albeit with specific changes not yet confirmed.

Reviews and transformations of TA were well underway in our remaining four case study areas. The drivers and nature of these changes are described here in turn, starting with Perth and Kinross, where the transformation is perhaps most radical and well advanced.

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<sup>92</sup> East Lothian Council (2018) *East Lothian Local Housing Strategy 2018-23*. [file:///Users/bow494/Downloads/East Lothian Local Housing Strategy 2018 23.pdf](file:///Users/bow494/Downloads/East%20Lothian%20Local%20Housing%20Strategy%202018%2023.pdf)

<sup>93</sup> East Ayrshire Council (2013) *Local Housing Strategy 2013-18*. <https://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/Resources/PDF/H/Housing-LocalHousingStrategy.pdf>



### ***Perth and Kinross: Home First***

Perth and Kinross' Home First transformation project started in 2015/16 and aimed to reduce reliance on and time spent in TA in the area<sup>94</sup>. It was driven by the combined aims of needing to make financial savings, and a desire to improve the service available to homeless households. Also relevant was the authority's recognition that many of those in TA had 'nothing but a housing need':

"we needed to deliver some savings and rather than top slicing and cutting services which is what often happens, it was like, right, let's actually invest in some redesign... then actually we can... deliver the savings that we need to deliver but actually do... something much better in terms of peoples' outcomes... I felt actually we could just, why are we putting people with nothing other than a housing need into temporary accommodation, keeping them there for ages and then moving them again?" (Perth and Kinross, statutory)

The redesign took a "full service, full systems" approach (Perth and Kinross, statutory), covering: early intervention to prevent homelessness among those at risk; the Housing Options prevention service; TA provision itself; support to homeless households throughout their application; and move-on options. The redesign led to a wide range of actions, interventions and changed protocols, including:

- 'flipping' TA to secure tenancies where households were happy/settled;
- addressing the backlog of cases owed a settled rehousing duty (whether residing in TA or not);
- a more proactive and flexible Housing Options approach that stays in touch with households about their circumstances and options throughout their application;
- an enhanced private rented sector offering, including a rent deposit guarantee scheme for homeless/at risk households, a social lettings agency and service for landlords, and proactive work with landlords seeking their property back to negotiate timings that allow the tenant to avoid TA;
- grants to get empty homes back into use and prioritise them for homeless households;
- work with housing associations to better enable prevention in cases of potential eviction and to increase the efficiency and appropriateness of allocations;
- incentives to under-occupying council tenants to downsize, freeing up larger properties;
- buy backs/open market acquisitions targeted at meeting local housing needs;
- improvements to void turnarounds and management;
- a new build social housing programme;
- culture change and empowerment of frontline staff e.g. via the introduction of a personalised budget frontline staff can access directly.

Perth and Kinross have seen radical changes in their homelessness, TA and rehousing statistics since the Home First model was introduced. Most notably, the authority have reduced the number of households in TA from 240 in 2015/16 to 115 in 2017/18, reduced their stock of dispersed temporary accommodation (from 109 to around 30<sup>95</sup>), and reduced average length of stay in TA from 258 days (8.5 months) in 2015/16 to 82 (around 2.5 months) in 2017/18. This has had the knock on effect of increasing the proportion of lets to homeless households in the area (standing at 49% in 2017/18), something this local

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<sup>94</sup> Perth and Kinross Council (2016) *Local Housing Strategy 2016-2021*. [http://www.pkc.gov.uk/media/38351/Local-Housing-Strategy-2016-2021/pdf/2016023\\_Local\\_Housing\\_Strategy\\_CLIENT](http://www.pkc.gov.uk/media/38351/Local-Housing-Strategy-2016-2021/pdf/2016023_Local_Housing_Strategy_CLIENT)

<sup>95</sup> Social Bite/Indigo House (2018) *Scotland's transition to rapid rehousing: Market area analysis, legislative and culture review*. Edinburgh: Social Bite.

informant sees as proportionate and not ‘crowding out’ the needs of other households on the housing waiting list:

“I know we’ve got high allocation to homeless but... whilst we’re still, we’re focused on homelessness, we’re not forgetting about the other people in housing need as well” (Perth and Kinross, statutory).

### ***Dundee: from a rigid staircase model to rapid rehousing?***

Dundee has now also embarked on a review and transformation of TA provision. The Council’s 2016-21 Housing Options and Homelessness Strategic Plan committed to: raising standards in TA and housing supports (to the Care Inspectorate’s Grade 5 or above) and monitoring service user satisfaction ratings and outcomes; exploring Housing First; developing and implementing guidance on psychologically informed environments; and reviewing current models of TA “so that people who are homeless can access accommodation and holistic support which suits their individual circumstances”<sup>96</sup>. As described in chapter 5, the strategy also envisions enhanced homelessness prevention work, including a Lead Professional model providing those with complex needs with a named contact to help them navigate services, access the support they need, and avoid homelessness.

In July 2018, the cross-sector TA Transformation Plan Project Group provided an analysis of current TA provision for single people in the city, as well as an overview of recent relevant developments (e.g. the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group’s recommendations, associated publications and consultation work with those experiencing homelessness)<sup>97</sup>. The group identified a range of specific ‘drivers of change’ in the Dundee context, specifically, consistently low occupancy rates/high void levels in hostel accommodation (sitting at just under 20%); that a majority of service users have complex needs and have been homeless before (many multiple times); that housing is available; and that there is poor take up of support<sup>98</sup>. The transformation plan sets out to reduce the amount of hostel provision in Dundee over (at least) two years, as well as redesign and improve that accommodation to better meet the needs of those who use it, including by ‘re-designating’ some hostels as ‘supported accommodation’<sup>99</sup>. The associated draft implementation plan indicates that the transformation will involve a reallocation of resources to early intervention and community (i.e. floating) support, the opening of new small-scale permanent supported accommodation, and provision of Housing First tenancies (including using current ‘networked flats’ i.e. social sector TFFs). Statutory local informants described the overall aim of the agenda as to ‘reshape’ the TA sector to get “the right kind and the right numbers of supported accommodation to meet those extreme needs” against a backdrop of a “long-term vision... around the prevention of homelessness”.

Also relevant is that Dundee is one of five local authorities involved in Social Bite/Corra Housing First initiative, which will establish Housing First tenancies for those with multiple

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<sup>96</sup> p.25 in Dundee Health and Social Care Partnership, et al. (2016) *Housing Options and homelessness strategic plan (2016-2021)*.

<sup>97</sup> Dundee Temporary Accommodation Transformation Plan Project Group (2018) *Everyone deserves a safe place to live: Dundee Temporary Accommodation Transformation Plan, Report to the Homeless Partnership Strategic Group, July 2018*.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid and Dundee Third Sector Temporary Accommodation Transformation Group (no date) *Everyone Deserves a Safe Place to Live Presentation*.

<sup>99</sup> Dundee Temporary Accommodation Transformation Plan Project Group (2018) *Everyone deserves a safe place to live: Dundee Temporary Accommodation Transformation Plan, Report to the Homeless Partnership Strategic Group, July 2018*.

and complex needs. This statutory sector local informant describes how this fits in to the wider transformation agenda:

“We are going to use the Housing First money as a transition and then redirect health and social care monies to the right kind of support for in-tenancy support. Then I think what we will end up with is... numbers and units still to be decided, but at the end of the day, a much, much lower number of temporary accommodation units that would be used for a much shorter time, so a more rapid turnaround.” (Dundee, statutory)

### ***Glasgow: responding to systemic process problems***

In Glasgow, the transformation agenda has a long history expanding back beyond the decommissioning of the city’s large-scale hostels during the 2000s<sup>100</sup>, and subsequent shortages of temporary accommodation for single men<sup>101</sup>. Over an extended period, Glasgow City Council has not met its legal duties to temporarily accommodate some homeless households<sup>102</sup>, which has led to a multi-stage internal strategic review<sup>103</sup> and the long-term voluntary involvement of the Scottish Housing Regulator<sup>104</sup>.

Phase one of the strategic review involved: the extension of Housing Options services; a strategic partnership with key social housing and homelessness sector partners (the Housing Access Board) to improve access to housing; the development of a strategy to shift to earlier interventions, a needs- rather than resource-led approach, and a separation of housing from support; a focus on addressing the barriers faced by homeless people with complex needs; and internal reorganisation to ensure effective strategic leadership of this agenda. Phase two of the change programme involved: a redesign of commissioned services to improve outcomes and achieve financial efficiencies; a continued focus on meeting the needs of those with complex needs; a partnership with a community based housing association to relocate and improve standards in short-stay accommodation for homeless families; and the remodelling of assessment and casework services, out of hours support and outreach housing support.

Other major developments in the city include the establishment of the City Ambition Network in 2015, a partnership between five organisations<sup>105</sup> to improve services for and

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<sup>100</sup> Fitzpatrick, S., Bretherton, J., Jones, A., Pleace, N. and Quilgars, D. (2010) *The Glasgow Hostel Closure and Re-provisioning Programme: Final Report on the Findings from a Longitudinal Evaluation*. Centre for Housing Policy, University of York: York.

<sup>101</sup> Fitzpatrick, S., Pawson, H., Bramley, G. Wilcox, S. and Watts, B. (2015) *The Homelessness Monitor: Scotland 2015*. London: Crisis.

<sup>102</sup> See chapter 3 and Anna Evans Housing Consultancy, with Davidson, E. Mandy Littlewood Social Research & Consulting Ltd and Solomon, S. (2014) *Homelessness and Complex Needs in Glasgow*. <http://aehousing.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/FINAL-SUMMARY-ON-AEHC-WEB-30.1.15.pdf>; McArdle, H. (2013) *Charities: no room for the homeless*. Herald Scotland, 1st December 2013. <https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/13134261.charities-no-room-for-the-homeless/>; Shelter Scotland (2017) *Evidence of Gatekeeping in Glasgow City Council*. [https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/professional\\_resources/policy\\_library/policy\\_library\\_folder/evidence\\_of\\_gatekeeping\\_in\\_glasgow\\_city\\_council](https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/professional_resources/policy_library/policy_library_folder/evidence_of_gatekeeping_in_glasgow_city_council)

<sup>103</sup> See Glasgow City Council Integration Joint Board (2017) *Homelessness services – Transformational change: Update and next steps*. Item 8, 15<sup>th</sup> March 2017.

[https://glasgowcity.hscp.scot/sites/default/files/publications/IJB\\_Meeting\\_20170315\\_Item\\_8.pdf](https://glasgowcity.hscp.scot/sites/default/files/publications/IJB_Meeting_20170315_Item_8.pdf); Glasgow City Council Integration Joint Board (2018) *Homeless services: update on current developments*. Item 14, 13<sup>th</sup> June 2018: [https://glasgowcity.hscp.scot/sites/default/files/publications/ITEM%20No%2014%20-%20Homeless%20Services%20-%20Update%20on%20Current%20Developments\\_0.pdf](https://glasgowcity.hscp.scot/sites/default/files/publications/ITEM%20No%2014%20-%20Homeless%20Services%20-%20Update%20on%20Current%20Developments_0.pdf)

<sup>104</sup> See chapter 3 and Scottish Housing Regulator (2018) *Housing people who are homeless in Glasgow*. <https://www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/publications/housing-people-who-are-homeless-glasgow/>; Glasgow City Council Integration Joint Board (2017) *Homelessness services – Transformational change: Update and next steps*. Item 8, 15<sup>th</sup> March: [https://glasgowcity.hscp.scot/sites/default/files/publications/IJB\\_Meeting\\_20170315\\_Item\\_8.pdf](https://glasgowcity.hscp.scot/sites/default/files/publications/IJB_Meeting_20170315_Item_8.pdf)

<sup>105</sup> Glasgow City Mission, Simon Community Scotland, The Marie Trust, the Health and Social Care Partnership (Glasgow City Council and the NHS) and Turning Point Scotland.

find ways of assisting the city's most vulnerable and excluded rough sleepers. This has subsequently received funding to scale-up and intensively work with a larger cohort of complex needs rough sleepers over the next 3 years, including via a pilot of a city centre multi-agency hub<sup>106</sup>. Glasgow, like Dundee, and Edinburgh (see below) is also in the process of adopting Housing First models for this complex needs group. Glasgow is unusual in the Scottish context in having some well-established Housing First provision, run by Turning Point Scotland since 2010<sup>107</sup>, but Housing First provision in the city is in the process of rapid expansion given Glasgow's involvement in the Social Bite/Corra Housing First initiative and investment from Big Society Capital to help decommission congregate models of TA in favour of Housing First schemes<sup>108</sup>. This aligns well with the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group's recommendations. One key informant explained that these complementary change agendas can be thought of as completing the partial transition begun in Glasgow under the hostel closure programme:

"I think there's been a paradigm shift over the last few years from academia, the Housing First experience. It's brought a focus on this that never really existed in the past... What have we been doing for the last number of decades?... the hostel closure programme. What were the hostels doing? The hostels were a classic example of warehousing type temporary accommodation and they learned some of the lessons from that, but they never really followed it through logically I don't think. What they were doing with warehousing people, very few people got through there into settled accommodation and that was the real tenancy ready judgement case was made there and then. When we dismantled all of that, we created another set of supported accommodation much more user friendly, supportive, psychologically informed environments, but we never really focussed on the big question of what were we using temporary accommodation for?" (Glasgow, statutory)

A major focus in Glasgow is now to reduce the numbers and length of stay in TA. Local informants in the city were clear that achieving this level of change in Glasgow will be challenging even in the context of such senior level buy-in and vision, not least due to the size, complexity and established ways of working of the relevant bureaucracy:

"One of the challenges there on a statutory level is, you have an army of workers, probably 1,500 workers across the city who have worked in these services for many, many years who, not only that's the mind-set, but any changes to anything... it's turning a tanker. The council take a long, long time to get things through... it's a huge, huge council and it just takes time to embed some of these principles and embed some of this new work" (Glasgow, non-statutory)

"it's very complicated... if you're a manager in the case work team in Glasgow City Council and you find a fundamental flaw and you want to change it, then it isn't easy because you've got union issues, which are quite right. People quite rightly should be represented by a union. You've also got the whole committee structure, you've got the

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<sup>106</sup> See <https://www.glasgowcitymission.com/about-us/what-we-do/city-ambition-network.php> and Glasgow City Council Integration Joint Board (2017) *Homelessness services – Transformational change: Update and next steps*. Item 8, 15<sup>th</sup> March 2017. [https://glasgowcity.hscp.scot/sites/default/files/publications/IJB\\_Meeting\\_20170315\\_Item\\_8.pdf](https://glasgowcity.hscp.scot/sites/default/files/publications/IJB_Meeting_20170315_Item_8.pdf); Glasgow City Council Integration Joint Board (2018) *Homeless services: update on current developments*. Item 14, 13<sup>th</sup> June: [https://glasgowcity.hscp.scot/sites/default/files/publications/ITEM%20No%2014%20-%20Homeless%20Services%20-%20Update%20on%20Current%20Developments\\_0.pdf](https://glasgowcity.hscp.scot/sites/default/files/publications/ITEM%20No%2014%20-%20Homeless%20Services%20-%20Update%20on%20Current%20Developments_0.pdf)

<sup>107</sup> See <http://www.turningpointscotland.com/what-we-do/homelessness/glasgow-housing-first/> and Johnsen, S. (2013) *Turning Point Scotland's Housing First Project Evaluation: Final Report*. Edinburgh: Heriot Watt University.

<sup>108</sup> Glasgow City Council Integration Joint Board (2017) *Homelessness services – Transformational change: Update and next steps*. Item 8, 15<sup>th</sup> March 2017 [https://glasgowcity.hscp.scot/sites/default/files/publications/IJB\\_Meeting\\_20170315\\_Item\\_8.pdf](https://glasgowcity.hscp.scot/sites/default/files/publications/IJB_Meeting_20170315_Item_8.pdf)

[elected members] and now, you've got this added layer of the integrated joint board and how all that works together... that's created another element of greyness around who's actually promoting homelessness and dealing with it" (Glasgow, voluntary)

In this context, the clear direction of travel indicated by the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group's recommendations was seen to be helpful: "I would like to think that the whole... pressure around producing that rapid rehousing plan and embracing the Housing First [model] will see a... cultural shift because that's really what we need." (Glasgow, non-statutory).

The recently published Scottish Housing Regulator report also provides clear impetus for change, with subsequent committee papers detailing the required 'action plan for improvement' in response to the regulator's findings<sup>109</sup>. Key actions are: to ensure a consistent approach is taken across the council's four homelessness teams; to increase the number of Section 5 referrals to social landlords; to streamline and accelerate the rehousing process, especially for those with minimal support needs; and to work with landlords to minimise supply side blockages and ensure good practice in pre-tenancy checks and processes. Glasgow is also in the process of moving towards an 'alliancing' model of homelessness commissioning and service provision. This will involve the City Council inviting alliances of third sector partners to submit bids on how to collaboratively address homelessness, with a strong focus on reducing the use of temporary accommodation in the medium- to long-term. The local authority are expected to go out to tender in late 2018<sup>110</sup>.

### ***Edinburgh: improving temporary accommodation in the context of acute housing pressure***

The pressures described in previous chapters of this report have also driven a change agenda on homelessness generally, and TA specifically, in Edinburgh. In November 2017, the Housing and Economy Committee announced that a Homelessness Task Force would be established<sup>111</sup>. Chaired by the newly appointed Homelessness Champion (Councillor Kate Campbell), the group was tasked with reviewing: the cost of TA provision and alternatives; the complexity of service user needs; the suitability of current TA; and the impact of current and future welfare reform<sup>112</sup>. A strong specific focus was on B&B accommodation, with the task force set to explore alternatives that would better meet the needs of individuals and families, ultimately ending the use of such accommodation altogether. Recommendations and planned actions from the Task Force's deliberations were published in June 2018<sup>113</sup>, and outlined that the outcomes sought by the group would be:

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<sup>109</sup> Glasgow City Council Integration Joint Board (2018) *Homeless services: update on current developments*. Item 14, 13<sup>th</sup> June 2018. [https://glasgowcity.hscp.scot/sites/default/files/publications/ITEM%20No%2014%20-%20Homeless%20Services%20-%20Update%20on%20Current%20Developments\\_0.pdf](https://glasgowcity.hscp.scot/sites/default/files/publications/ITEM%20No%2014%20-%20Homeless%20Services%20-%20Update%20on%20Current%20Developments_0.pdf)

<sup>110</sup> Glasgow City Council (2018) *UK's First Alliance to End Homelessness*. Glasgow City Council news release, 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018. <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=23265>

<sup>111</sup> Housing and Economy Committee, City of Edinburgh Council (2017) *City Housing Strategy 2018*. Item 8.1, Housing and Economy Committee, 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2017

[http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/4266/housing\\_and\\_economy\\_committee](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/4266/housing_and_economy_committee). See also <http://www.ghn.org.uk/our-work/action/glasgow-alliance-end-homelessness/> and <http://www.ccpScotland.org/gaeh/>.

<sup>112</sup> City of Edinburgh Council (2017) *Task force set up to tackle homelessness in the Capital*. City of Edinburgh Council news release, 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2017.

[http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/news/article/2384/task\\_force\\_set\\_up\\_to\\_tackle\\_homelessness\\_in\\_the\\_capital](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/news/article/2384/task_force_set_up_to_tackle_homelessness_in_the_capital)

<sup>113</sup> Housing and Economy Committee (2018) *Homelessness Task Force – Actions, Recommendations and Outcomes*. Paper for City of Edinburgh Council's Housing and Economy Committee, Item 7.7, 7<sup>th</sup> June 2018. [http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/4413/housing\\_and\\_economy\\_committee](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/4413/housing_and_economy_committee)



- no families or 16/17 year olds accommodated in B&B and the number of (single) people and length of time spent in B&B accommodation reduced;
- an increase in the stock of TA, specifically flats, supported accommodation and new forms of TA;
- continued reduction in homeless presentations;
- implementation of the Housing First approach.

Early recommendations as to how to achieve these outcomes were as follows:

- Consider options to secure alternative accommodation for 16/17 year olds in B&B, including young people's shared housing, self-contained flats, and young people's supported units;
- Deliver awareness raising and training sessions on accessing appropriate services to council officers likely to encounter rough sleeping in their daily activities e.g. street cleansing operatives and park rangers
- Review housing allocations policy, ensuring it gives reasonable preference to homeless households and those in other categories of housing need and covering: transparency and flexibility in relation to bidding for properties; priority groups and points, including prioritisation based on vulnerabilities; online access to housing application forms;
- Review the supports available to those in private rented sector accommodation, covering financial assistance, landlord engagement (individually and via an open forum) to increase access to PRS tenancies, rent deposit guarantee schemes, and working with families in the PRS who have received a notice to quit to prevent homelessness;
- Review the use of ICT systems to improve access and information for service users, including information about statutory duties/rights and service user responsibilities, an online housing options tool, facilitation of customer feedback to enable service change/improvement, including via confidential mailboxes, and exploration of new methods of contacting service users based on their preferences;
- Review of information packs provided to services users at the point of presentation, including about their entitlements, available advice and support agencies, care and professional standards staff must adhere to, and person-centred action plans for each homeless household, including details of their housing options, a record of the interview and supports/advice needed;
- Improve access to mid-market rent properties via training for housing advice staff, assessment of routes into mid-market rent for homeless households that meet the criteria, and collaboration with housing associations providing such accommodation;
- Following implementation of these recommendations, service user engagement events and a customer survey to discuss existing and future service delivery models.

In addition, the Task Force recommended continued funding of the new 'shared housing' model (see chapter 4) and the introduction of an easy to access rating system for those in this form of TA, to be collated and form part of the council's contracts management processes. The most recent committee papers also record an intention to review safety in TA in the city and an extension of the lifespan of the Task Force to enable consideration of and alignment with the recommendations of the national Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group<sup>114</sup>. Local informants in Edinburgh were positive about these

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<sup>114</sup> Housing and Economy Committee, City of Edinburgh Council (2018) *Rolling Actions Log*, Item 5.2, 1<sup>st</sup> November 2018. [http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/4566/housing\\_and\\_economy\\_committee](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/4566/housing_and_economy_committee)

developments, with one statutory sector participant commenting that “the task force... has been incredibly helpful for us in terms of raising the profile... the extra money and the profile it's got and investment in the service has been fantastic” (Edinburgh, statutory), albeit noting that the formal status of the Task Force and committee structures had meant that the pace of potential change had in some instances been slowed. There were, however, notes of caution around the ability of radical transformation of Edinburgh's TA stock – and in particular an end to the use of B&B accommodation – given the housing market context and supply issues:

“the council are looking at... a shift [of] focus. Rather than having bed and breakfast where they get their breakfast stuff, there's no facilities for cooking, its looking at having a bit more flexibility there... a bit more independence... there's opportunity there... and I would hope as we are having more of a focus around prevention, so less people coming through the system, and having more focus on increasing the proportion of lets going to statutory homeless, that will have an impact in terms of bed and breakfast and temp accommodation so I think it's more of an incremental thing rather than what has sometimes been suggested... a period of whatever, six months or a year and just blitz it and deal with it and it will be gone. It's not as simple as that, and that's what I struggle with in terms of these quick fix solutions when there just isn't a quick fix solution to it.” (Edinburgh, non-statutory)

“It's a really simplistic solution to say we need more affordable housing stock... That is pretty simplistic, but actually real because that is one of the major challenges that we have.” (Edinburgh, statutory)

This non-statutory key informant thought that current activity in Edinburgh fell short of tackling this underpinning supply issue and was too focused, instead, on improving conditions in current TA:

“There was a task force set up to end the use of B&B... by the end of June... they were looking to increase the provision of PSL properties and they were looking to change some of the B&Bs into more self-contained units. Put washing machines and things in... I think any upgrade, it can only be better in the B&B. I think what it avoids is a fundamental issue of there not being enough properties in the first place... I haven't felt... any joined-up thinking... any long-term thinking in Edinburgh around how they increase the supply of temporary accommodation. It's not been an end-to-end conversation... they're very siloed in their thinking and it's how do we take what we've got and make it a bit better, as opposed to how do we increase the supply.” (Edinburgh, non-statutory)

### **Views on the national temporary accommodation transformation agenda**

A significant number of local informants across the voluntary and statutory sector were broadly positive about the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group's recommendations (for a summary see chapter 1 and appendix 1), albeit with some notable exceptions (see below). These positive perspectives ranged from “really welcoming” (Glasgow, non-statutory) the recommendations, to being “comfortable” with them, but reflected a fairly positive orientation to the substantive content of the recommendations and the ‘vision’ for TA and wider homelessness services they articulate:

“You wouldn't argue with any of them... I think we get the policy direction... rapid rehousing will probably kind of cause us to rethink... but in a positive way as well” (East Lothian, statutory)

“I can't fault any of it. I think the themes, the principles and the recommendations are fundamentally right.” (Glasgow, statutory)

“I think there's general support for it... any arena I'm going into or talking to colleague organisations, I think people are happy with that. I think they want to see something different happen” (Glasgow, non-statutory)

“I think that over time... we may have to start defining it a bit more and thinking through some of that, but I think for now it's a direction for people. I think that's probably enough for everyone.” (Glasgow, non-statutory)

Sometimes this reflected the clear complementarity between the Action Group's recommendations and the change agendas already underway in some local authorities described above. This was clearly the case, for instance, in Perth and Kinross and in Dundee (albeit where transformation plans are at an earlier stage):

“it's all quite happily and quite neatly fitting into the journey we're already embarked upon.... it's facilitating and helping that journey forward. I think that's all really, really good, ” (Dundee, statutory)

Local informants often also, however, emphasised that despite supporting the direction of travel defined by the Action Group, they had concerns about the feasibility of what were seen as incredibly ambitious reforms. These tensions were most clearly articulated in our three higher pressure local authorities – Glasgow, Edinburgh and East Lothian:

“for some, the journey is much more difficult than others, so for us I think it will be as difficult as it can be given the context. Some other authorities where they've got low demand areas for instance, they've got relatively easy solutions” (East Lothian, statutory)

“the aspirational stuff. Naiveté is maybe the wrong word, because I think it's much more about aspirations, but it's getting there.... Sometimes it's quite difficult to translate into the reality of managing services with the resource and the financial involvement and the nature of how this city delivers its response to homelessness and all the issues that in some ways are quite unique to Glasgow. Overall, I think you have to say that they're needed and they're welcome. It's the bit about how you get to the reality of delivery and that's always a challenge” (Glasgow, statutory)

In Edinburgh, where pressures are particularly acute, there were more serious concerns about the feasibility of the recommendations:

“everybody understands and accepts the recommendations that they (HARSAG) made, but they're right on the cusp of seeming out of touch, I would suggest... They're very ambitious, and... fundamentally, right, I can understand why people would recommend that... why people comfortable in third sector organisations who don't actually have to discharge these duties would suggest it. That's probably one of my biggest challenges throughout the process... we all agree with it, but are you going to come... see how you deliver that?” (Edinburgh, statutory)

The uniqueness of the challenge faced within individual authorities – and their vastly different ‘starting positions’ in implementing the Actions Group's recommendations – was a



theme that emerged across the case studies, and one that led local informants to emphasise a need for flexibility in terms of how those recommendations are pursued:

“I think one size doesn't fit all... You cannot compare the situation in Glasgow to what we have here in Perth and Kinross to what they have in the Highlands. You can't. Therefore it isn't one size fits all. Our starting positions are all very different... there's 80 recommendations and you've got lots of different local authorities with different operating environments. I think that's where we do need the flexibility... we need that flexibility within almost that wider vision of outcomes.” (Perth and Kinross, statutory)

“there's no one in our unique position... National recommendations are meaningless when everybody's got such a different context, so if there was a wee breaking those recommendations down further - and that's what some of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans are absolutely about” (Edinburgh, statutory)

As this second comment suggests, several local informants were fairly positive about the role of Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans – which local authorities were working on at the time of fieldwork – in facilitating the development of bespoke local strategies:

“one of the bits I think local authorities have struggled with is that they didn't - the perception they didn't know this stuff, the perception that they didn't know that people were in temporary accommodation for too long... but I think where they find themselves now is in the agreement about that and what is being provided to them now is some tools [i.e. Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans] to help them.” (Glasgow, non-statutory)

Albeit noting the “really tight timetables” (Edinburgh, non-statutory) according to which these must first be developed, something that one key informant noted had prevented cross-sector engagement in the development of those plans.

Local key informants identified two major factors as key to the effective pursuit of the Action Group's recommendations and their local Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans. First, and most dominant, was the clear message that this agenda requires resources.

“we need to look at the notion that there's some residual pot of money within... Grant aided expenditure... There are no residual funds there.” (Glasgow, statutory)

“I think extra government subsidy finance to assist would be extremely welcome because it is the tax payer in East Lothian that is helping subsidise our overspend on homelessness. So we are over budget year on year in terms of bed and breakfast provision alone so yes, anything the Scottish Government could do to help, if you want to realise all these ambitious targets and things, then some funding to assist us... it's fine of the Scottish Government to say, you know, and it's great they have really progressive policies, approaches. Our ability to deliver on it will be severely hampered by the finance that we have and the financial situation that we're in” (East Lothian, statutory)

“I think these things sound good in theory but it's how - when budgets aren't getting increased, you know... it's all right these ideas coming up and I know that sounds very negative but I just don't see how it's actually going to be implemented.” (Perth and Kinross, non-statutory)

“they're very much pushing the delivery and the funding of that down to local authorities and without any real meaningful central government supports other than this five year funding, but that's - they've made it very clear that's not going to go beyond that. It's not a long-term thing. So you've got local authorities who already are cash strapped and really struggling, who are expected to be able to deliver this” (Edinburgh, non-statutory)

For some local informants, and especially those in lower demand areas, it was the funding available to provide adequate support for those with higher needs moving straight (or more quickly) into settled housing that was seen to be key:

“It always comes down to money, doesn't it, which we don't have, we're not getting any more of... what they have to do is consider the amount of money they spend on the support element because it is very, very minimal. They say they want people supported and they want people helped and kept in a tenancy and sustainable tenancies, but if they're not prepared to say that they'll pay for those people to provide the support, I don't know where they think it's going to come from.” (Dundee, non-statutory)

“I think before we can move on to HARSAG, we need to make sure that we have all the resources in place and right now that doesn't happen. So I think there's a place for temporary accommodation, there's certainly a place for hostel accommodation for some chaps, some of the guys that come in. I think moving towards having a house for everybody, I don't think it's possible right now for them just to bypass temporary accommodation, go straight in right now. If that changes and there's more resources and then great... I think right now we need to always have temporary accommodation.” (East Ayrshire, statutory)

Some local informants were conscious of the cost savings likely to accrue in aggregate to public spending from the effective delivery of the rapid rehousing agenda, but saw 'capturing' those savings as an incentive for change as challenging, given that they are likely to accrue to public agencies not responsible or accountable for the deliver of this agenda. The second local informant quoted below saw firm Scottish Government intervention as the key resolution to this issue:

“There's cost savings... we've tried to sell it... we're saying, 'Well, it might cost housing a bit more, and it might cost health and social care a bit more, but it's going to save loads of money for the police; it'll save loads of money for the ambulance; it'll save loads of money on hospital appointments. The housing will save money, because you're not keeping on giving out tenancies, and then they're getting abandoned...' So, we're working on that model that there's savings here for everyone, and we'll get a better service. That's the way we're kind of trying to pitch it... we're trying to work on the easy, the low-lying fruit, and work on the easy things.” (Dundee, non-statutory)

“I think the argument is always [it's] fine because it'll all be self-funding because you'll do all this work around Housing First and that will save so much money but that again is over simplistic because it's not necessarily the folks within the housing side of things [that will see the savings]... there's a lot of people that might be having a huge intensive resource... [via] Housing First, people now that are not costing that service anything and it's looking wider at other public sector organisations, so health would be a big one, policing et cetera, et cetera. Some of our discussion with Scottish Government are saying look... there needs to be a re-allocation of resources and that must be driven by Scottish Government on a national level.” (Edinburgh, non-statutory)

For many local informants, the emphasis was instead strongly upon resources in the form of the housing supply required to realise the Action Group's rapid rehousing agenda, even in the lower pressured case study areas:

“the new supply is absolutely key... is there a commitment from the Scottish Government to continue to invest in new build, affordable, social housing?... where is the support from the Scottish Government across the piece in terms of enabling that, so if there are land acquisition problems and all these fundamental structural planning

types of issues. That has to happen. We cannot just do rapid rehousing within, even just with partners and whatnot.... if we don't have the new supply it's not going to happen" (Perth and Kinross, statutory)

"supply to me is key to all of this because all that – a lot of what is going to happen I think is just about re-prioritising. It is a scarce resource there and at the end of the day, Rapid Rehousing is great and it's good that people should get absolutely fast tracked through the system and everything. But what about other people who need housing, too? Unless we have a huge increase in supply – because the basic problem here is lack of supply of genuinely-affordable, good-quality accommodation – then I don't – I think it's a big ask." (Dundee, statutory)

In local policy documents overall housing supply is not seen to be an issue in Dundee<sup>115</sup>, but local informants consistently reported challenges finding suitable accommodation for families specifically.

The theme of housing supply as a key enabler was very strongly echoed by local informants in Edinburgh, but given the scale of housing supply issues in the city emphasis was also placed on homelessness prevention and increasing access to the private rented sector (see also chapter 5):

"the bottom line in Edinburgh is that we don't have the housing stock in terms of the affordable housing... That is the big, big issue, which surrounds all of these discussions... There's not a magic wand to suddenly solve that because we've got a scarce resource... and I think sometimes that is lost in terms of the discussion... the pressures are less in some other parts of the country in terms of the supply side of it, so that's just a big, big challenge" (Edinburgh, non-statutory)

"[progress...] will depend on the scale and the speed of the affordable homes programme. That is the key driver... to do what the government's asked us to do will require investment... Continued reductions in homeless presentations and an increase in affordable housing stock should go some way to doing that, but I would hope there will be a definite increase in the amount of private sector accommodation we're using because there is nothing else." (Edinburgh, statutory)

In Glasgow, reflecting the rather different dynamics underpinning the TA pressure seen in the city, greater emphasis for achieving a rapid rehousing model was placed on streamlining internal processes:

"there's a lot of improvements we can make to the temporary furnished flat situation in Glasgow, without a lot of extra resources and just refocusing what people are doing and making associations and councils and support providers just work a lot closer together. You've got to bear in mind, a lot of people living in temporary furnished flats don't need any serious levels of support anyway. All they're looking for is a permanent place to live." (Glasgow, non-statutory)

The second major factor identified as key to the effective pursuit of the Action Group's recommendations and their local Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans was **buy-in and on-going commitment** from all levels of local authority staff, non-statutory partners and Scottish Government. Some participants emphasised the importance of buy-in within the local authority, identifying that while senior levels of staff may already be committed to the agenda, mid- and lower-levels of staff delivering services on a day to day basis are not:

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<sup>115</sup> Dundee Third Sector Temporary Accommodation Transformation Group (no date) *Everyone Deserves a Safe Place to Live Presentation*.

“it's political will... I'm talking about small p, political will, and it's that buy-in from mid-level down that we need... It's alright sitting with the director of housing and they're saying, 'That's a great idea', but the director of housing isn't the one on a day-to-day basis, saying, 'Come on, network flats, chop, chop.' That's what we need.... The other enabler would be money... transformational money... but I think the bigger thing is that political will.” (Dundee, non-statutory)

“one of the barriers... [is] staff not really being aware of any of this stuff. So I think the educational element is incredibly important to bring – to help everybody to get to the point where they understand why... this could work” (Glasgow, non-statutory)

This was a particularly strong theme in Glasgow, perhaps reflecting the scale and history of the local authority structure. Perth and Kinross had also found staff buy-in, enthusiasm and ownership of the change agenda key to the implementation of the Home First model, something this local informant saw as partly facilitated by the structured project management approach adopted:

“The staff buy-in and commitment, their ownership, their passion, their enthusiasm has been absolutely key. I think that collective leadership, playing to all the different strengths... also the senior leadership and the political leadership because [there were] a lot of hoops to jump through as you can imagine in terms of member officer working groups, committees, the whole business case. We did follow a very structured project management approach to the whole project.” (Perth and Kinross, statutory)

Perhaps reflecting Perth and Kinross' experience in transforming its homelessness services, one local informant suggested that a consolidated and clearer version of all the Action Group's recommendation reports would be helpful.

Reflecting a similar view about the importance of local leadership, this Glasgow local informant saw a transition to rapid rehousing as ultimately dependent on local authorities and their 'bravery' to entirely change commissioning practices, including decommissioning long-standing services (e.g. larger hostel) that the public and some in the sector may see as counter-intuitive as a progressive response to homelessness:

“a lot of it lies with local authorities. I think people won't believe this change is coming until local authorities are commissioning differently and delivering services differently... it is going to come down to that bit... are the local authority going to not re-commission a well-known, well-established homelessness project that the community believes is a homelessness response?... I think it still requires a bit of bravery for a local authority to be able to do that... even though we might be able to explain why that's the right thing to do, there are going to be people saying, 'Well, there's people rough sleeping over there and you've just shut a homelessness project'... that will be very counterintuitive... and that will face resistance.” Glasgow, non-statutory)

Other local informants emphasised the importance of **buy-in from and effective partnership with a wider set of players**, including public sector agencies (criminal justice, health and social care, for example), third sector organisations and housing associations, highlighting that existing relationships with and cultures within these organisations are not currently adequate to deliver on the rapid rehousing agenda and the wider set of Action Group recommendations:

“if we're looking at rapid rehousing for those people then it's looking at well, it's not just housing, we need to look at what are these people's issues and who is going to help that?... so whether it's criminal justice or the third-sector or addictions, then we really

need that buy-in and commitment, not just down to... an officer within a housing service.” (East Ayrshire, statutory)

“you’ve still got certain organisations that are yet to buy in... whether it be your [names several large congregate TA provider organisations]... ‘we’re always going to be here, we’ve got no plans to... move forward... We’re going to be here whether you like it or not.’ There’s not that kind of excitement, I suppose, about... the HARSAG stuff... I think there’s a lot of people behind it... which I think has been amazing. But there is still big parties within Glasgow that might not be buying into it as much” (Glasgow, non-statutory)

“housing providers should be key in contributing to that plan rather than just expecting them to fall in behind it. I think there’s got to be buy-in from landlords [housing associations].” (Glasgow, non-statutory)

Articulating very similar concerns, several local informants saw action at Scottish Government level, possibly through legislative reform, as fundamental to resolving these issues and ensuring that appropriate services are available to households with health, social care and other support needs experiencing homelessness:

“in terms of the government, where they’re at and what they’re doing I think needs to be absolutely key. I don’t think they’ve properly pinned down what their expectations of the health and social care partnerships are. We had our letter from the Scottish Government saying that we will be consulting and speaking with or writing to leads, health and social care partner leads, that hasn’t happened as yet, so we need that backup and that support.” (Perth and Kinross, statutory)

“I think the other key issue here is through legislation, making sure that homelessness is not looked on as a dumping group... We’ve got a woman in a network flat who’s actually [anonymised very severe physical disability]. We’re dealing with people... on suicide watch and they get put in a hostel and... We’re dealing with people who have got significant and deep-rooted mental health problems... you could go to a whiteboard there and write down about 25 problems with eight different departments involved... Then, at the end of a big long meeting... they’re going to turn round and ask me. Well by the way they’ve got nowhere to go tonight, what are you going to do about it? In my opinion the homeless hostels are not designed or equipped to deal with some of the clients” (Dundee, statutory)

A final local informant expressed concerns specifically about the sustainability of the agenda to transform TA and homelessness services and the likely negative impact of waning national and local attention on the issue:

“There’s a big focus about homelessness just now and a big focus about a new supply and all that’s coming together at the same time, and that’s great. It’s a real opportunity for housing. My concern is, is that going to last?... what I’m hearing is that the next big focus is going to be health and social care and it’s going to move away from the housing agenda. So is this just something that’s very topical just now and it’s very high profile? It’s needs to be long term to be sustained. We cannot have this flurry of activity around rapid rehousing, Housing First now, for the next few years and then it just drifts on to something else. There needs to be something sustaining. It needs to be sustained both... nationally and locally” (Edinburgh, non-statutory)

So far this section has emphasised some level of consensus in line with the Action Group’s recommendations and the rapid rehousing agenda, albeit with varying levels of concern about the feasibility of these plans and clear views on the need for adequate resources and

cross-sector buy-in to pursue it effectively. This consensus however was not universal, with some local informants **resisting the Action Group's strong emphasis on rapid rehousing** and defending the central role of supported hostel TA. This was particularly the case in areas making significant current use of hostels, and as might be expected, among some (though not all) voluntary organisations providing this kind of TA:

"I still think there's a need for temporary accommodation. I think there's a need for it to be variable and to suit the needs of the individual. For some people temporary accommodation could be an excellent stepping stone from a broken relationship, a potential property loss for whatever reasons. I think it could be – if it's good quality, it could be an excellent opportunity for someone to use it as a stepping stone into appropriate accommodation" (Perth and Kinross, non-statutory)

"The rapid rehousing, I think needs to be carefully considered... everybody's journey into homelessness is different and unique to them. It might be that they're not ready for rapid rehousing... That shouldn't be a one size fits all, definitely not.... we need to be careful around that. That makes me slightly uneasy that." (Perth and Kinross, non-statutory)

"For some the theory might be, well, the sooner they're out into a flat of their own the better. In terms of some of the national debate just now, we would take the view that for some that might be the case but for many of the people that we work with... they really value the space, the time, the community, the opportunity to be supported." (Edinburgh, non-statutory)

"I don't think we should be too quick in saying we don't need temporary accommodation... I don't like the undue haste of saying to somebody, 'Right, you're in here, you're homeless. Here's a house.'... He's had a house three times now and every time he's come back. Another house is not the answer. You're needing to look at all the problems around this." (Dundee, non-statutory)

It was also a view articulated by some statutory sector local informants, although there was more emphasis here on the role of supported hostel type TA for a small subset of the homeless population:

"we need to move towards... the right kind and the right numbers of supported accommodation to meet those extreme needs... It's not just about hostel accommodation; it's resettlement supported accommodation and that's part of the model you will see. It's retaining some of that for the more complex and chaotic cases." (Dundee, statutory)

"For a small proportion of people, there will probably always require a level of supported living, either because of their health and social care needs, their institutionalisation. We're dealing with a substantial amount of people in the city where prison is a revolving door. So the whole notion of a shared living environment is very difficult to unravel when folk are running out of custody or jail constantly and they're actually quite attuned to living in environments where everything is done for them... Particularly if it's also around drug and alcohol use as well. Although for some, Housing First would be an obvious route, for others we need to accept the fact as well that either medium-term or even long-term [supported hostel accommodation] might be the destination" (Glasgow, statutory)

It is important to note that the Action Group recommended moving towards a 'rapid rehousing by default' approach, recognising that for a small group, a mainstream tenancy even with intensive support may not be suitable. The relevant recommendation states that:

“Someone who is rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping for whom rapid rehousing or Housing First would not yet be suitable (either because they do not want to move into mainstream housing, or because they have such a severe set of needs that they cannot safely be rehoused in mainstream accommodation) should be provided with accommodation that deals with their particular needs with the specialist support that is required.”<sup>116</sup>

It would appear that these local authority perspectives on some kind of residual role for supported hostel-like TA, particularly those expressed by the Glasgow local informant, are most in-line and consistent with the Action Group’s recommendations, with a much clearer tension evident with the views of some of the voluntary sector hostel providers quoted above.

Other local informants took issue less with the idea of rapid rehousing by default *per se*, but instead raised concerns about whether there is sufficient emphasis on tenancy sustainment for those rehoused rapidly, highlighting the importance of rapid rehousing being into suitable accommodation with adequate support where needed:

“We have to remember that the whole thing about rehousing is sustainability, we’ve got to get people back in to tenancies that they’re going to stay in and not come back to us a year from now or whatever. If we’re set with a target, you’re going to push, push, push and they’re going to end up taking something they really don’t want and that’s not fair on anybody” (East Ayrshire, statutory)

“[we’ve] no concerns with the recommendations... They’re focused on getting people straight into accommodation but what’s really missing is all the wee bits that go with making a home to make that home sustainable as well, set up, furniture, all those wee things. That’s not been covered” (Perth and Kinross, statutory)

“I think we need a bigger element of available housing support... that’s quite tolerant and housing support that is active and engaged.... we need people who are actually going to keep knocking on the doors. [Existing floating support services] are not doing that... We want this intensive availability for people if they want to move because otherwise you’re just going to get them coming back.” (Dundee, non-statutory)

As noted at the beginning of this section, there was broad support for the thrust of the Action Group’s recommendations, including the most to Housing First. Once again, however, this was not universal and some local informants were sceptical regarding the emphasis on Housing First for homeless individuals with multiple and complex needs. In particular, some voluntary sector hostel TA providers were critical given their view that Housing First was being seen as a ‘panacea’ or was a ‘bandwagon that is out of control’, although both the local informants quoted below do see some potential role for Housing First provision in their areas:

“[it] remains to be seen if that’s a model that’s going to work well in the UK. I don’t think we should be, at this stage, looking at it as the panacea of all answers to homelessness.... I think certainly on paper it ticks a lot of boxes, without doubt. It’s

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<sup>116</sup> p.8 in Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (2018) *Transforming the use of Temporary Accommodation in Scotland: An interim report on the activity of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group*.  
<https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/corporate-report/2018/05/homelessness-and-rough-sleeping-action-group-interim-report/documents/36232fb2-5237-4a27-b0bf-da126ec2a624/36232fb2-5237-4a27-b0bf-da126ec2a624/govscot%3Adocument>

actually, how does that transfer in real time living... I think certainly, definitely an interesting idea and one that should be definitely explored and monitored closely ... It's like everything else, there's going to be issues with it, without a doubt" (Perth and Kinross, non-statutory)

"I think it's a bit of a bandwagon that's a bit out of the control at the minute. I think people are laying far too much store on it... I'm not against Housing First in certain situations it's a very valuable model but I would see it only happening in Dundee for a certain percent of individuals... but certainly there are clients that we have known for ten years who have been going round and round and yes, there's certain individuals that I would target and target it to a relatively small amount of people. You have to ask the question about who - what about everybody else?" (Dundee, non-statutory)

This final local informant's concern regarding the narrow target group for Housing First and 'equity' issues with other homeless groups was echoed by another local informant who perceived the focus of the Actions Group's recommendations to be too narrowly focused and risking creating a 'two tier' system:

"[Housing First] only respond[s] to a particular set of issues and it doesn't deal with the wholeness of the homelessness situation... to focus on that purely is to miss the bigger picture... the focus is on people with multiple and complex needs – rough sleepers. That's great that there is an avenue, you know, a track but you're in danger of creating a two-tier system that if you're in that situation you are accelerated through the homelessness route... what about people who are not rough sleeping and don't have multiple and complex needs but have been - have left the property because of relationship breakdown or debt...? you want to capture people at that point before they end up in a situation, where things are ten times worse. So I think that whilst the initiatives coming out of HARSAG are positive, it's a cohort of people that are going to benefit from that to the detriment of people who don't have multiple and complex needs. That two tier system can have - from a public perspective - it looks as though you only get a house if you've been rough sleeping." (Edinburgh, non-statutory)

Other local informants appeared to buy in to the rationale for Housing First provision for the group it seeks to target, but were concerned about the long-term financial and cross-agency resources required to make it work:

"with Housing First... In terms of that being an accepted way forward, I think people get it. I suppose, like all of these things, it's the scaling up issue, isn't it, how that can happen and as usual, there will be issues around resources... one of the key principles of Housing First is that, people get support ad infinitum and... I suppose we're struggling to find how that is going to be guaranteed or delivered over a ten, 15-year period" (Glasgow, non-statutory)

"we couldn't resource that with what we currently have in place at the moment. We would need additional funding, and it can't just be down to Housing Options or other housing service, because it would need that real specialism from the likes of mental health and addiction services, and financial inclusion team. We would need access to all that" (East Ayrshire, statutory)

One local informant from Glasgow highlighted that Social Bite/Corra Housing First initiative could help address some of these issues and begin to show how local authorities can "translate [these local projects] into something that might be meaningful on a bigger scale." (Glasgow, non-statutory).



Another contentious element of the Action Group's recommendations concerns the **proposed extension of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order** to all homeless households, beyond just those including children<sup>117</sup>. In three of our case study areas this simply wasn't an issue as B&B accommodation is not used. In Edinburgh, East Lothian and Glasgow, however, extending the order would have significant implications for the local authority. While entirely in agreement that B&B accommodation is unsuitable for people to stay in, these areas had strong concerns about the feasibility of such an extension and its possible unintended consequences:

"if we had alternatives to unsuitable accommodation we would use them. The fact is that often putting someone in unsuitable accommodation is the difference between a family being split up and going round their friend's or into different accommodation, or some people sleeping rough, so it's absurd" (Edinburgh, statutory)

"I think we all probably share the view that bed and breakfast is not accommodation that we would like to offer people but we have to do it if somebody's saying that they've got no roof over their head... bed and breakfast is a fall-back position... to make sure that we're meeting every need to provide a roof over their head... we'll have to continue to do that until there's a change in resources that are given to us." (East Lothian, statutory)

"I think it's debatable in terms of its benefit. I think that if the Scottish Government is intending to bring it forward we need to have some serious dialogue in relation to the timescales and the implementation process." (Glasgow, statutory)

This Edinburgh local informant shared very similar concerns, with the caveat that extending the order could be used either as a 'stick to beat us with' (which would be unwelcome) or as a method of making the case that local authorities using B&B need more resources to address the issue (which would be welcome):

"On a personal level, I don't think anybody should be placed in bed and breakfast... On an ambition level from the Scottish Government, if they think as the local authority we can resolve it... I think we think that [is] enormously challenging... Just because you set an arbitrary timescale of seven days, 14 days, 100 days, no days is irrelevant... we move people as quickly as we can... and we'll do it professionally... saying we're going to reduce it is meaningless at the moment in Edinburgh... we don't have the resources to meet it.... If it's used as a stick to beat us with then that's a real difficult and challenging position for us to be in but actually if it's then used as a method for say[ing] Edinburgh has a particular challenge and a particular problem... So let's give them a bit of [a] settlement in order for them to be able to do that. Let's make sure we've got the grant funding in place to build more houses. If that's what it's used for, it's fine but simply [to] say that is meaningless unless there's an investment behind it or a plan behind it or support behind it." (Edinburgh, statutory)

Voices seeing benefit in extending the unsuitable accommodation order and seeing such an extension as feasible were few and far between, but not non-existent:

"what it does... is it gives us focus because you work towards targets... It creates a discipline within the system. It creates movement and it's better for people" (Glasgow, statutory)

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<sup>117</sup> See recommendation 21, Appendix 1.

“I think it's very feasible, yes. There needs to be a reduction in the siloed thinking between housing and homelessness, social care. People just need to start getting their act together, working together.” (Glasgow, non-statutory)

What is interesting to note is that voluntary sector local informants and participants from local authorities who wouldn't be affected by an extension of the order (because they do not use B&B) were sympathetic to the concerns of local authorities who would be impacted:

“I absolutely support it. It's whether or not it's possible and what we're finding is that there's a lot of regulation, there's a lot of good practice, there's statute and if it's not being followed then what? So it's what is the actual penalty and there is an argument from the council's perspective where they're going to go, 'What do you want me to do?' This is what we're finding and... there is a recognition that in some local authorities, Edinburgh being one of them, how can they improve or increase the stock... if the property market is the way it is.” (Edinburgh, non-statutory)

“the current Unsuitable Accommodation Order... shows an awareness of the degree of difficulty that we face... So temporary accommodation has to satisfy that... Cut us some slack, you know, I mean homelessness is not a nice thing. It's not pleasant for the people that it is affecting but it is a pretty hard gig for us as well. So the more restrictive you make it, the more difficult it is for us to provide the service and I think we'll have to accept that we live in the real-world.” (Dundee, statutory)

“I think there would be issues with feasibility to extend it you know, how far do you extend it?... I don't know whether they should roll it out any further” (East Ayrshire, statutory)

There was moderate support from some local informants for **the introduction of standards across all forms of TA**, as described by these participants:

“I think standards... they allow you to focus. They allow you to be clear around expectations... if you've got core standards that you're expected to meet or to achieve or work with, then I can see the merit in it” (Glasgow, statutory)

“I think Scottish Government maybe yes, making, having set standards... we've got standards in terms of a lettable standard and what not, I don't think there's a set standard that all local authorities must follow... it needs to be water tight and what not... that's fine for mainstream tenancies, but temporary accommodation needs a higher standard in terms of furnishings, decoration, and things like that.” (Perth and Kinross, statutory)

The resource implications of such a move were recognised: “some sort of standard is definitely desirable. If it's achievable then I guess that's down to the resources within each department” (East Ayrshire, statutory). However, there were concerns about the **unintended consequences of a renewed focus on TA standards**. These Glasgow local informants, for example, were both concerned that any sharp move to increase standards in B&B accommodation could lead to rapid disinvestment from providers, exacerbating TA access issues in the already pressured city:

“The devil [is] in the details... because what you can do is you can have a premature withdrawal from the market of B&B providers and we only have two or three, but if they say, 'We're not doing this any more' it would precipitate a major problem for us, possibly unnecessarily. It would have to be planned.” (Glasgow, statutory)

“I think they could be helpful if they were carefully designed... I think if something was forced through without having been properly thought through in terms of the unintended

consequences, I think that would be unhelpful because I think it would... vastly reduce the amount of emergency accommodation that is available without any potential alternatives.” (Glasgow, non-statutory)

These local informants, also from Glasgow, pointed to a different concern; that a focus on **improving standards within TA might distract from the priority task of minimising the use of TA:**

“if the goal is to frankly get out of bed and breakfast, I think we're saying that is our goal. Then actually if we are sitting down discussing with providers that actually we need you to put laundry facilities in here... as opposed to saying so your plan is basically to be out of this and therefore having different conversations with different people. That might be the trade-off” (Glasgow, statutory)

“I'm wary of minimum standards. I'm wary of something that we create whereby we say, 'You must meet...'... everything just stops there and then we create an industry of people who go round and check it and you're going, to what end? Really? To make it a little bit better?... the focus should be on people not needing it in the first place. We can try and perfect this system that we don't want to have... I would rather we spent less of our time on that and much more of our time on creating an environment where we don't need to place people in there in the first place.” (Glasgow, non-statutory)

By and large, local informants were not familiar enough with the homelessness prevention duties introduced in England and Wales to comment on their desirability in Scotland. To the extent that participants did comment on this option, it was to say that it would be desirable “if they're [local authorities] of the view that it's going to help them to do their job” (Glasgow, non-statutory). One local informant commented that intensive prevention work “happens... anyway” (East Ayrshire, statutory) and thus didn't see the added value of a new duty, but equally, didn't see the introduction of such a duty as problematic or too onerous. What is clear from elsewhere in this report is that local authorities in Scotland would likely value a public sector prevention duty that strengthened the obligations of partner agencies in preventing and responding to homelessness.

One local informant highlighted the possible prevention duty as one aspects of a wider concern regarding the Action Group recommendations and Scottish Government's implementation of them. This oriented around the considerable uncertainty within which local authorities are currently working and developing their Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans. The participant argued strongly that greater certainty about the nature and timescales of Scottish Government-led change (legal reform, the development of a new code of guidance, impacts on health and social care partnerships etc.) would make local authority level changes easier to plan and pursue:

“there's an awful lot in there for the Scottish Government to do, a whole number of actions... and how are... local authorities going to produce these plans when we don't know what the key milestones are for the Scottish Government? So if there's any legislative change, what is the plan and when will that happen?... will they be revising the code of guidance next year, the year after or the year after that? What will that look like? Will they be changing to a duty in terms of prevention and when will that be? What will be coming out of the recommendations in terms of RSLs and health and social care partnerships? What exactly will be expected of health and social care partnerships and when will that be? For us to actually produce a five-year plan between now and Christmas in the absence of the Scottish Government and their key milestones I think is

really difficult... Where's their plan and where are their key milestones and then we can plan and dovetail with that.” (Perth and Kinross, statutory)

## **Conclusion**

Previous chapters have detailed that most of our case study authorities are a considerable way from the ‘vision’ of TA and homelessness services provided by the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group’s recommendations. Some local authorities in particular have large portfolios of TA, much of which is not ‘normal’ dispersed accommodation, in which homeless households stay for long periods of time and which rest in some cases on ideas of ‘tenancy readiness’ and progression up a staircase of provision. However, locally-led strategies and service redesigns bringing TA and homelessness systems closer to the rapid rehousing model are underway or in the planning stages in almost all of the case studies. Aspects of Scottish Government-led reforms then – particular those focused on minimising the use of and lengths of stay in TA – appear to dovetail to some significant degree with locally felt imperatives.

Many local stakeholders voice broad support for the thrust of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group’s recommendations and subsequent moves to shift to a rapid rehousing by default approach to homelessness and TA. There were, however, widespread concerns over the feasibility of what were seen as incredibly ambitious reforms. Commitment of resources – in the form of funding for housing support and affordable housing stock – was seen as one key enabler of change, as was buy-in and on-going commitment from all levels of local authority staff, non-statutory partners and Scottish Government. There was some doubt that current understanding and commitment among middle-management and frontline staff in LAs, and existing relationships with key partners, are sufficient to ensure the successful implementation of the rapid rehousing agenda.

Certain aspects of the Action Group’s recommendations were controversial amongst some local informants. Some were critical of the strong emphasis on rapid rehousing and Housing First, defending the role of supported hostel accommodation including as a space for reflection and care. This was particularly the case among some voluntary sector TA providers. Statutory sector key informants tended to defend only a very residual role of congregate TA consistent with the Action Group’s recommendations. Other local informants were concerned that recommendations lacked focus on tenancy sustainment, and the importance of ensuring households access suitable accommodation with adequate ongoing support. Another concern voiced by a subset of mainly voluntary sector local informants was that the emphasis on Housing First risked being a ‘bandwagon’ that couldn’t live up to it’s billing, with some also concerned that the focus on this model risks creating a two-tier system in which rough sleepers are prioritised above others in housing need. Proposals to introduce further legal restrictions to the use of unsuitable B&B accommodation for more than 7 days for all household types received very little support among those who participated in this study. There was more support for the introduction of enforceable standards across all forms of TA, but recognition that this could compete with the wider transition to rapid rehousing in terms of implementation capacity and that the introduction of standards could have negative unintended consequences (including rapid disinvestment of providers) unless carefully managed.

## **8. Conclusions**

Scotland continues to retain its status as a world-leader in the realms of homelessness policy in virtue of the uniquely strong rehousing entitlements owed to homeless households. Nevertheless, this study reveals the manifold ways in which Scotland's temporary accommodation system is not fit for purpose.

### **Temporary furnished flats**

Temporary furnished flats form a large, often dominant, component of provision in all case study areas and are the majority form of provision nationally. Local authorities face an ongoing dilemma regarding whether to bring more dispersed social sector temporary accommodation into use at the cost of reducing settled housing stock. Using housing association stock means local authorities have less control over the location and nature of the stock and it can cost more. Single people are systematically disadvantaged in accessing dispersed temporary furnished flats, especially in Scottish cities and higher demand areas. This reflects the prioritization of families but also in some areas (and especially in Dundee) views on the appropriateness of ordinary social sector housing for those with complex needs and/or behavioral problems, largely connected to concerns about the impact on neighbours, the property and its furnishings. Despite using dispersed social sector temporary accommodation primarily for families, Edinburgh reported using local authority flats combined with more intensive support for some single people who struggle most in hostel and Bed and Breakfast accommodation.

Living in temporary social sector accommodation came with very significant benefits over B&B and hostel accommodation for those we spoke to. This reflected its 'normality', the almost total absence of rules and routines restraining households' autonomy, and the lack of issues relating to having to share accommodation with other homeless households. Nevertheless, people who had stayed in this form of temporary accommodation often reported negative (and sometimes extremely negative) experiences. The most concerning issues related to allocations of temporary accommodation that were profoundly unsuitable, in terms of size (with overcrowding, including the sharing of beds, relatively common) or suitability (in relation to health issues or disabilities). Also common were negative impacts associated with the accommodation not being well located for people's family or relevant services and amenities, people not being able to make the place their own (because of rules or a sense that there was no point), being in what residents perceived to be a 'bad area', issues of physical condition (sometimes with safety implications) and poor/unresponsive repairs services. Families with children are almost always accommodated in dispersed temporary furnished flats and parents frequently spoke of the impact of temporary accommodation on their children in terms of stigma, lacking a sense of home and stability, not having adequate space, being far away from school, friends and family, with attendant negative impacts on children's wellbeing and mental health. Uncertainty over where they would end up, feelings of being 'in limbo' and lacking any control over their (and their families) lives and future was a common theme for those in temporary furnished flats, who could be in temporary accommodation for very long periods.

### **Hostels**

Hostel accommodation is a core component of temporary accommodation in most areas and the dominant form of provision in two of our case study areas (Dundee, and Perth and Kinross). The size, design, facilities, management and staffing of – as well as support provided within – hostels varies significantly between and within local authorities. Local

stakeholders report some hostels being of a high quality and providing an important part of the temporary accommodation system, and some residents report positive experiences of this kind of provision. Hostels were, however, associated with a wide range of challenges from the perspective of local stakeholders across all case study areas, particularly regarding the negative impacts associated with congregate accommodation, namely: conflict and anti-social behaviour, substance misuse, institutionalisation, exclusions, and under-occupancy/high voids. At worst, hostels function as 'negatively enabling' environments, fuelling addiction and vulnerabilities. It is striking – and counterintuitive – that part of hostel staff's role can be to seek to 'equip' people for mainstream tenancies while they are accommodated in an environment that de-skills them in just those ways. This, of course, is part of the reasoning and philosophy behind Housing First and rapid-rehousing approaches now being pursued across Scotland following the recommendations of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group.

Those with experience living in hostels identified a series of disbenefits, ranging from awkwardness around sharing facilities to much more severe issues of safety and exposure to criminal and other damaging or threatening behaviours. Staff were not always experienced as having a supportive approach, and living in hostels generally constrained people's autonomy and control over their environment, given rules and established routines often designed to manage the congregate nature of the unit. People could not eat, sleep, socialise, come in and out, or conduct relationships with friends and family as they wished to. An extremely important problem for a subset of those living in hostels was the difficulty it posed in relation to seeing their children. All these issues were exacerbated when people stayed in hostels for long periods and where buildings and rooms were not kept clean, were in a poor state of repair or were poorly furnished. In combination, these issues could have profoundly negative impacts on individuals' mental health and wellbeing.

### **Bed and Breakfast accommodation**

Bed and Breakfast accommodation, generally considered to be the least suitable form of provision, is relied upon to a significant degree in areas with higher pressure on their temporary accommodation system, namely Edinburgh, East Lothian and Glasgow. It is associated with management and suitability challenges due to its congregate nature; because sufficient support is often not available; and because some Bed and Breakfasts are in poor physical condition. The highest Bed and Breakfast using local authority (Edinburgh) contests that concerns about the physical condition of Bed and Breakfasts in the city have been overstated, not least given substantial continuing efforts to monitor and raise standards, but acknowledge that a significant concern is such accommodation's suitability for people to stay in for anything but a very short period. Despite seeing Bed and Breakfast accommodation as a 'last resort' form of temporary accommodation, local stakeholders across our case study areas argue that it plays a necessary and important role when no other accommodation is immediately available, to keep people off the streets and to ensure families can stay together. It is also seen as suiting homeless households in specific (admittedly infrequent) cases, for example where it offers accommodation in a preferable location and/or when local hostel accommodation is ill-suited to the individuals' needs or preferences. It can also allow local authorities time to find homeless households more suitable longer-term temporary accommodation. The absolute commitment not to use Bed and Breakfasts in Dundee has made finding emergency accommodation for families extremely difficult, leading to overcrowding in temporary furnished flats.

Among people with experience of living in Bed and Breakfasts, the weight of opinion was decidedly negative. Key issues related to: the presence of manifold rules and lack of

facilities that substantially restricted people's autonomy; the absence of support or a 'caring' context; and issues associated with the congregate nature of Bed and Breakfasts, specifically being in an environment where conflict, anti-social behaviour and substance misuse could be common. There were substantial parallels then, with people's negative experiences in hostel accommodation. Some people, however, had stayed in Bed and Breakfasts that were well-equipped and managed and free from a negative social environment. Others reported valuing the location of Bed and Breakfasts that they had stayed in given their proximity to friends, family, services and/or amenities. Several had been entirely satisfied with their Bed and Breakfast accommodation, and one single man with complex needs expressed a strong preference for such accommodation rather than hostels.

### **The relative merits of different types of temporary accommodation**

The current consensus that temporary furnished flats are the best, and Bed and Breakfasts the worst, form of temporary accommodation is borne out by this study. This, however, should not crowd out acknowledgement that each of the three major forms of temporary accommodation were associated with particular challenges for local authorities and negatives for homeless households.

A key distinction emerging from the analysis presented here is that in hostels and B&Bs many of the drivers of negative experiences are intrinsic to the nature of that provision, and therefore not 'fixable'. Many negatives people experience in these two forms of provision are the direct result of the congregate environment and rules/routines in place to manage it. Where restrictions on resident autonomy are in place, but do not serve such crucial functions, they should be removed. Some issues, by contrast (cleanliness, facilities, how self-contained individuals' living spaces are) are at least in principle fixable via different commissioning practices and higher standards, and we see examples of hostels where these issues do not pertain. Raising the bar across hostel provision to this level would undoubtedly improve people's experiences in this form of temporary accommodation.

In the case of temporary furnished flats, this balance shifts, with almost all of the issues associated with negative experiences in such accommodation extrinsic to its form, including the suitability of the specific accommodation, whether it is big enough for the household, its location, how clean and well equipped it is, and its state of repair. As such, almost all the negativities associated with dispersed temporary accommodation are in principle fixable. The only exception here is the intrinsically temporary nature of the accommodation and associated lack of certainty over when people will move on and their ability to settle and 'make the place their own'. Even this could be subject to positive intervention with expanded and mainstreamed use of 'flipping' such accommodation into a settled tenancy where appropriate, and via efforts to expand understanding and knowledge of the rehousing process and likely periods in temporary accommodation. More frequent use of 'flipping' could also resolve challenges some areas (particularly Glasgow and Dundee) face retaining appropriate levels of dispersed temporary accommodation – enough to meet demand, but not too much that they carry voids. Finding ways of managing the costs associated with flipping (in terms of refurnishing new temporary accommodation units if they are needed), either locally or nationally, would help facilitate this.

Some negative experiences of temporary accommodation were common across hostels, Bed and Breakfasts and temporary furnished flats. The importance of location for those residing in temporary accommodation, in relation to their friends and family, services and amenities, and in particular school for families with children was clear. While local

authorities are managing temporary accommodation placements in a constrained environment, finding ways to maximise the suitability of allocations, perhaps even utilising very short stays in Bed and Breakfast to do so where the households would prefer, may be worth considering on the basis of this study's findings. The work disincentive effects of living in temporary accommodation were evident across all forms provision too, with people's exposure to this issue relating primarily to local authority and/or service level charging practices (and, of course, whether they are ready and able to move into work). The negative impacts of extended and uncertain lengths of stay were also a feature of negative experiences across the temporary accommodation provision, albeit less so in Bed and Breakfasts where stays tend to be shorter.

Across all forms of temporary accommodation there was striking variation in resident experiences, and whilst the negatives have been highlighted here, extremely positive testimony has been detailed in the main sections of the report, especially in temporary furnished flats and to an extent in hostel accommodation, with a spectrum of experiences also clear in relation in Bed and Breakfasts. The clear implication is that the quality of the worst examples of all these forms of temporary accommodation could be increased via improved commissioning, greater regulation and/or the introduction of enforceable standards. Raising the average quality of provision in these ways could dramatically alter the most negative aspects of temporary accommodation residents' experience.

### **Length of stay and moving on**

Data on length of stay reveals that in high pressure areas (East Lothian, Edinburgh and Glasgow) living in temporary accommodation is a far from short-term experience. Average lengths of stay run to one and a half years in dispersed forms of provision with some households spending multiple years in temporary accommodation. Average stays in non-local authority run hostels are also extremely long in some areas (East Ayrshire, Edinburgh, East Lothian and Perth and Kinross), and it is not clear from the data analysed here whether these lengths of stay are a proportionate response to need or a potentially problematic reflection of service ethos. Our analysis has also illuminated continuing practices of assessing whether homeless households are 'tenancy ready' in some local authorities, in particular Glasgow but also Dundee, that constitute a major barrier to a shift to rapid rehousing, albeit one that appears to now be recognised at senior levels. Despite the clear rejection of this 'housing readiness' logic by the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group, it is worth noting that it receives partial legitimisation within current homelessness law in the form of the non-permanent accommodation regulations. These enable local authorities to provide interim accommodation to those not deemed ready for settled housing. The recent paradigm shift towards a rapid rehousing response to homelessness raises questions about the defensibility of this legal codification of ideas of 'tenancy readiness' and progression through temporary supported to independent accommodation that have been subject to such firm and robust critique.

### **Mismatch between need and supply**

A further fundamental issue is the apparent radical mismatch between the kinds of temporary accommodation (and associated support) available within particular areas and the needs profile of the population utilizing temporary accommodation. The direction of the mismatch varies by area, with some local authorities facing an under-supply of low support temporary accommodation and others an over-supply. In the former, many temporary accommodation residents are likely to be living in (and paying for) higher support accommodation than they need, with associated inefficiencies from the public sector



perspective but also higher work disincentives likely given that this group may well be in a position to work, but paying high weekly charges incorporating a support element. In the latter case, where there is an over-supply of low support temporary accommodation, many households are likely to be lacking access to the support they need. What is also clear from this study is that the transition to forms of accommodation for people experiencing homelessness that 'de-link' accommodation and support (enabling personalized, flexible and efficient provision) is far from complete, with support most consistently available in hostels (albeit of variable quality and often insufficient specialisation), sometimes inadequate in temporary furnished flat provision and invariably inadequate in Bed and Breakfasts (despite recent improvements in this regard, particularly in Edinburgh).

### **Costs and work (dis)incentives**

New local authority data on the weekly charges attached to different forms of temporary accommodation reveals the radically different methods deployed to calculate these charges, which range from £40 to £1,300 a week across all forms of provision. This differential in part reflects that some of these charges include support costs, including specialist support provision for those with complex needs, whereas others do not. But this is not likely to go far in explaining the enormous variation in weekly charges for temporary furnished flats specifically, ranging from £65 a week in some areas to over £400 in others. Very low charges are achieved in some areas by using the General Fund to finance the temporary accommodation service, but this is clearly not mainstream practice across local authorities, meaning that those in temporary accommodation face a stark postcode lottery in their ability to access temporary accommodation that is affordable, particularly for those in or seeking work. Localised and discretionary attempts to mitigate the strong work disincentive effects associated with high weekly charges do little to address the systemic issues at play here that exact a sometimes extraordinarily high price in terms of households' wellbeing and future prospects.

### **Policy implications**

This study strongly reinforces the importance and legitimacy of Scottish Government's objective to transform temporary accommodation in Scotland. At best, temporary accommodation offers a short-term, high quality, suitable stop-gap en route to settled housing. But at worst, and commonly, it forces people into a negative and damaging environment for an extended period that profoundly restricts their autonomy, undermines their wellbeing and damages their life chances. The research also reveals the scale of the changes needed to transform temporary accommodation, the different nature of task across the country, and belies any notion that 'quick fixes' focused on addressing issues in one form of provision (for instance Bed and Breakfasts) will achieve the changes necessary to ensure that temporary accommodation always acts as a positive stop gap, not a negative and damaging 'trap'.

The policy implications from this research are as follows:

1. All forms of temporary accommodation can lead to negative experiences and outcomes for homeless households and (where relevant) their children. The proposed move towards a 'rapid rehousing by default' response to homelessness now underway provides the means of minimising these negative impacts, and would help facilitate many of the policy shifts outlined below.
2. The quality and suitability of all forms of temporary accommodation vary considerably. Measures should be introduced to ensure that all forms of provision meet standards of

good repair, cleanliness, adequate facilities and furnishing, and appropriate buildings management. These standards should be designed to minimise the risk of negative unintended consequences. In particular, they should avoid leading to the rapid withdrawal of key temporary accommodation providers from the system before alternatives are in place and avoid unreasonably limiting local authorities' implementation capacity to move to a rapid rehousing response.

3. The most negative experiences are associated with temporary accommodation that is profoundly unsuitable for particular homeless households, for instance, due to health conditions, overcrowding, or because it leaves them far from their friends and family or key services (e.g. schools). Local authorities should seek to ensure that temporary accommodation allocations are suitable for specific households' needs, especially where stays will be longer-term. Scottish Government should consider monitoring the suitability of temporary accommodation allocations beyond the current focus on Bed and Breakfast use, for instance, encompassing a focus on overcrowded families in temporary furnished flats.
4. As overall the worst form of temporary accommodation, Bed and Breakfasts should only be used as a 'last resort' by local authorities. Where used, efforts should be made to ensure that residents have access to the facilities they need (food storage, cooking and laundry facilities). Local authorities and third sector partners should consider whether higher quality and more appropriate models of emergency accommodation can be introduced as an alternative to Bed and Breakfast provision where the immediate elimination of Bed and Breakfast use is not currently possible. Resident experiences of Edinburgh's upgraded 'Shared Housing' Bed and Breakfast stock should be fully examined.
5. Recommendations to restrict the use of Bed and Breakfasts to a maximum of 7 days for all household types across Scotland should be pursued with caution. They will be very hard to implement in high Bed and Breakfast using areas in the short-term given current resources, and risk being disproportionate given the often comparable harms homeless households must negotiate in some hostel accommodation. Smaller and higher quality Bed and Breakfasts can play a positive role in accommodating households for a short period in a location that suits them, as an alternative to hostel accommodation for those that prefer it, and as an emergency option that enables the local authority to secure more appropriate dispersed temporary accommodation, rather than making profoundly unsuitable immediate allocations.
6. The rules and routines in place within hostel and B&B provision should be reviewed by providers and commissioners with a view to maximising the wellbeing and autonomy of residents. Where such rules are not necessary for the safe running of the unit, they should be removed.
7. Where temporary accommodation provided in the social rented sector is suitable for those living in it, 'flipping' to a mainstream social tenancy is highly desirable. The policy, culture and resource implications of mainstreaming such practice should be addressed by local authorities and Scottish Government.
8. Scottish Government and local authorities should address the systematic disadvantage currently faced by single people in accessing temporary furnished flats as opposed to other forms of temporary accommodation, while recognising the importance of

prioritising families' access to dispersed provision. Such temporary accommodation, with attached appropriate support, should also be considered appropriate for homeless people with multiple and complex needs.

9. Local practice deploying judgements of 'tenancy readiness' in deciding when homeless people are allocated settled housing should end. Scottish Government should review the non-permanent accommodation regulations that legally codify and legitimate the role of such judgements and are in stark tension with the rapid rehousing model, Housing First and international evidence.
10. The provision of support and accommodation to those experiencing homelessness should be 'de-linked' so that the support households need moves with them between accommodation (rather than being tied to residence in a particular place) and is personalised and flexible as people's needs change. Local authorities should seek – and be supported – to align their temporary accommodation provision to the profile of those needing it in their area and monitor this alignment on an ongoing basis, to ensure that households are not missing out on the support they need or forced to receive (and pay for) support they do not require.
11. The chronic work disincentive effects associated with high weekly charges for temporary accommodation should be systematically addressed to ensure that being temporarily accommodated doesn't lock people out of employment. The current postcode lottery in the weekly charges residents face should be addressed by clear guidance and through a reformed funding regime from Scottish Government.
12. Local authorities and Scottish Government should ensure that the move towards rapid rehousing responses to homelessness goes alongside a focus on the suitability of settled rehousing options and support for households to sustain their settled housing. Ensuring the availability of, and timely access to, the Scottish Welfare Fund is one key means of achieving this. The anticipated strain on the Scottish Welfare Fund and Discretionary Housing Payments with the continued roll-out of Universal Credit should be addressed by Scottish Government to mitigate potential impacts on homelessness and temporary accommodation.
13. Local authorities should expand homelessness prevention activity to include a greater focus on proactive and substantive interventions extending beyond general housing and tenancy rights advice and informing households of their entitlements under the homelessness legislation, including financial advice and assistance, help to move property (e.g. into the private rented sector or mid-market rent where affordable and accessible), and negotiations with private and social landlords. There should also be greater focus on early and upstream intervention before households are in crisis and in partnership with the range of relevant public and third sector agencies, including schools, housing associations, social work, addiction services and child protection agencies, and private landlords.
14. Scottish Government should be cognisant of widespread concerns about the feasibility of current recommendations to transform temporary accommodation and responses to homelessness in Scotland. Key areas requiring attention are: assurances of an adequate supply of affordable housing to facilitate the rapid rehousing model; the availability of resources to fund support for people in and after they leave TA to ensure sustainable outcomes; and the need for buy-in across all levels of local authority staff

and among relevant third sector and public sector agencies. Plans for legislative change to provide the tools necessary for effective partnership working are lent support by the results of this study.

15. There is currently controversy in some quarters about the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group's recommendations, with some local informants rejecting particular elements, in particular the emphasis on Housing First and rapid rehousing, and associated critiques of hostels. These views were particularly common in high hostel using areas and among providers of this form of accommodation. Key stakeholders in the homelessness sector should seek to strengthen the consensus around these recommendations to facilitate their implementation.

## Appendix 1: Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group temporary accommodation recommendations

The table below details the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Actions Groups full list of recommendations on transforming the use of TA, as published in May 2018. To demonstrate how recommendations made in this report build on prior work by the Action Group, recommendations made previously in the report on ending rough sleeping are highlighted yellow, with the new recommendations highlighted green.

Ref	Final recommendation
<b>SECTION 1</b>	<b>REDUCING THE NEED FOR TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION IN THE FIRST PLACE</b>
<b>1</b>	Ensure legislation provides sufficient support for shift to significantly greater levels of prevention - Scottish Government should examine the case for introducing a comprehensive homelessness prevention duty on local authorities and other public bodies, learning from and building on recent experience in Wales and England.
<b>2</b>	Legislate for a new prevention duty that brings the "Housing Options" approach into the heart of the statutory homelessness framework - so that outcome-orientated preventative practice can be better regulated, and also encouraged, as local authorities engaging in good preventative work will no longer be exposed to legal challenge. Extend robust preventative duties to other public bodies, Housing Associations and other organisations commissioned by public bodies to deliver homelessness and associated services.
<b>3</b>	Revise legislative arrangements that can result in difficulties with people being able to access their rights - Scottish Government should revise the legislative arrangements on local connection and intentionality. Specifically, they should commence the current provisions on intentionality in the Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003 and narrow the definition to focus on instances of 'deliberate manipulation' of the homelessness system. In addition, they should commence the provisions on local connection in the 2003 Act and Ministers should exercise powers they would then have under S8 to suspend referrals between local authorities to remove barriers to support for people who are homeless or rough sleeping or at risk of homelessness or rough sleeping. Scottish Government should monitor the impact of these changes on local authorities to respond to any LAs coming under undue pressure as a result of disproportionate net inflows.
<b>4</b>	Ensure local authorities and public bodies work together to prevent rough sleeping at every opportunity - There must be progress across the public sector to maximise opportunities to prevent all homelessness and rough sleeping. They should ensure adoption of a "no wrong door" approach to people who need homelessness assistance from any public or 3rd sector agency. Adopting the purpose, skills and culture of multi-agency housing options, we need to invest in empowered frontline-services, where staff are trained in trauma and psychologically informed environments (PIE) to ensure that people are assisted positively to access emergency and settled accommodation and support services rapidly. Local Authorities should transform the delivery of homelessness assessments to be more flexible, accessible and integrated with frontline services where homeless people are engaged and we should support LAs to discharge their

	statutory function on assessment through partnership with the wider public sector and third sector.
5	<p>Ensure plans are always agreed – or agreed as quickly as possible – to prevent homelessness for the groups who are predictably at highest risk of rough sleeping - Scottish Government and all public bodies should respond to evidence of which groups constitute the highest proportion of people resorting to rough sleeping to clearly articulate the pathways and interventions needed to prevent this outcome for particular groups. Evidence suggests this would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People leaving public institutions such as prison, mental health services, armed forces;</li> <li>• People with previous experience of public institutions such as prison, mental health services, armed forces;</li> <li>• Groups with particular needs such as people who have experienced domestic abuse, migrants, asylum seekers, refugees, people experiencing relationship breakdown, LGBT groups and people with experience of the care system or on leaving the care system;</li> <li>• People who have experienced or are experiencing poverty and/or adverse childhood experiences; and</li> <li>• Those facing potential eviction from the private rented sector, or the social rented sector including particular approaches on rent arrears.</li> </ul> <p>Where this exists (e.g. SHORE standards for prisoners) SG and others should ensure that the pathways are implemented; and where this does not yet exist for key groups as above, SG and others should ensure pathways are developed and implemented.</p>
6	<p>Support and enable people to maintain tenancies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for households in groups known to be particularly at risk of homelessness, through ongoing support to sustain tenancies, especially at times of potential rent arrears or at times of relationship breakdown. This includes taking steps to ensure victims of domestic abuse are able to maintain their tenancy if this is their choice;</li> <li>• Maintaining tenancies for people who are going to be absent from the property while in prison (particularly those on short-term remand) or in a hospital or other health institution. Much of this can be reinforced in a legislative prevention duty for public providers of housing and housing associations;</li> <li>• Tenancy sustainment schemes tailored to the Private Rented Sector, such as the scheme previously run by the UK Government's Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) known as the Private Rented Sector Access Development Scheme, which supports local 'Help to Rent' schemes to support homeless people and landlords and rent deposit bond schemes. Local Authorities have a duty to provide a rent deposit scheme within their area, but steps need to be taken to</li> </ul>

	<b>ensure these are fully accessible and comprehensive.</b>
<b>7</b>	<p>Set a clear national direction of travel to transition to a model of 'rapid rehousing' by default across Scotland, ensuring that the plans are developed and led locally to achieve this vision – this will impact on all groups of homeless people, not just people sleeping rough or at risk of doing so - Each local authority area to develop and cost a 5-year 'Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan' by December 2018, within the framework consulted on and published by the Action Group in June 2018.</p> <p>By 'rapid re-housing by default' we mean:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Someone who is rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping should be housed in settled mainstream accommodation as quickly as possible;</li> <li>- Someone who has complex needs and is rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping should be housed in settled mainstream accommodation with the necessary wraparound support (in line with Housing First principles) as quickly as possible; and</li> <li>- Someone who is rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping for whom rapid rehousing or Housing First would not yet be suitable (either because they do not want to move into mainstream housing, or because they have such a severe set of needs that they cannot safely be rehoused in mainstream accommodation) should be provided with accommodation that deals with their particular needs with the specialist support that is required.</li> </ul>
<b>8</b>	<p>Integrate rapid re-housing requirements into the Housing Needs Demand Analysis (HNDA) - The HNDA should include a definition of multiple/complex needs (to support planning for Housing First, plus statements on the numbers, size and types of housing needed to ensure rapid re-housing (including Housing First) can be planned for, while temporary accommodation can also be forecasted accurately. Plans for rapid re-housing and Housing First should also be integrated with the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP).</p>
<b>9</b>	<p>Continue to ensure an adequate and affordable social housing supply - Scottish Government, local authorities and Registered Social Landlords should continue to ensure an adequate affordable and social housing supply to tackle immediate needs and then maintain supply. This would be assisted by an agreed definition of affordable housing in the Scottish economic context and a long term view over the next 20 years, with cross party support for the commitment.</p>
<b>10</b>	<p>Ensure people have a range of different options at point of crisis to support them to avoid resorting to rough sleeping - Scottish Government should support testing and, where appropriate, scaling of Community Hosting models to diversify the housing offer available to those experiencing or at risk of homelessness (including for those without access to public funds).</p>
<b>11</b>	<p>Set targets for rehousing - Within the 5-year Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans to be developed by each local authority area by December 2018 there should be measures for increasing access to settled accommodation, which may involve upping the proportion of social lets to homeless households, on a transitional basis, to address the 'backlog' of temporary accommodation residents that have built up in some areas. This should form part of a broader 'whole housing system' approach</p>

	which seeks to maximise the full range of appropriate move-on options available to homeless households.
12	Promote the widest range of move-on options – This should include: local authority provision, social housing lets, private rented sector lets, and investment in alternatives such as testing and scaling community hosting models, and clarifying the tenancy and Council Tax arrangements for sharing so that sharing options can be used as settled mainstream accommodation options, to diversify the offer to people who would otherwise be using unsuitable forms of temporary accommodation such as generic B&B or unsupported hostels.
13	More effective move-on into the Private Rented Sector – All options should be explored at a national, regional Housing Options Hubs and local level to enable more people to move-on into mainstream settled housing in the private sector through: increasing levels of security of tenure, use of social lettings agencies, rent deposit bond schemes, and ‘help to rent’ schemes such as the previous DCLG scheme which supported local projects to provide pre- and post-tenancy support for tenants and landlords alike.
14	Support people to make the choice to remain in their temporary housing as a settled option - Promote and support the use of mechanisms that enable a tenancy to move from temporary to settled where this is the choice of the tenants – so-called ‘flipping’ - which means the tenancy changes without the household moving. To facilitate this, we need to ensure that households in temporary accommodation have access to active and ongoing information and advice about the local area.
15	Introduce regular and frequent review periods for people and households in temporary accommodation – By reviewing regularly this enables ongoing assessment and suitability of the accommodation option and the opportunity to explore the potential for it to become a settled option e.g. flipping a temporary furnished flat to full tenancy agreement.
<b>SECTION 2</b>	<b>SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE INTO, WHILE IN, AND BEYOND TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION</b>
16	Personal housing planning – the personal housing plan needs to become the default personalised planning tool for people who seek assistance in securing settled accommodation. While there may be a wide range of issues to resolve, the focus needs to be maintained on enabling people to move towards or directly into settled mainstream accommodation with whatever support they need to sustain that accommodation. This will in many cases and for many reasons include time in temporary accommodation, but personalised planning with a focus on housing is a key element of this.
17	<p>Empower front-line workers – so that decisions and resource allocation are as flexible and responsive as possible, and trusting relationships can be built that ensure psychologically-informed approaches can be taken. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Extend the role of front-line staff to carry out first line housing options / homelessness assessments - focused on a no wrong door approach and supporting rapid transition to the right resource e.g. place of safety. (To be clear, this does not mean decision-making on homelessness assessment, but maximising the flexibility of the Housing Options model);</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase and empower the range of frontline staff that can allocate accommodation and support to those of most concern;</li> <li>- Explore the potential for devolving financial resources to frontline provision that will support rapid transitions from temporary accommodation, including access to Discretionary Housing Payments and the Scottish Welfare Funds to facilitate rapid assessment and transition to the best possible accommodation/housing option.</li> </ul>
18	<p>Enable and encourage evidence-based support interventions, focused on people sustainably moving out of homelessness as the key outcome – we are not prescribing the approaches to be taken in every circumstance, but through training, provision of evidence and a focus on personalised housing plans, we need to equip front-line workers to deploy the right evidence-based interventions. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Highly personalised responses and improved consistency and continuity for those with ongoing social care needs - taking learning from LEAP Practitioner and Family Group Conferencing models;</li> <li>- Targeting assertive in-reach and intensive case management for those navigating known high risk transition points (e.g. prison leavers, hospital discharge) to move on to settled tenancies - learning from and deploying Critical Time Intervention (CTI) approaches.</li> </ul>
19	<p>Widen the options of temporary accommodation to maximise the opportunities to move-on to settled, mainstream accommodation – while the principles and evidence are clear about rapid re-housing and Housing First, and quite rightly focus attention on settled, mainstream accommodation, we also need to ensure the widest range of options are open where temporary solutions are needed. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop community based, landlord-led informal supports for people within mainstream temporary accommodation with low level social care need e.g. supportive neighbours, community volunteer programmes;</li> <li>- Widening the range of crisis intervention models to include community hosting options such as Nightstop and further exploring the role that other both paid and volunteer hosting roles can offer;</li> <li>-</li> <li>- Supporting the redesign of current models of purpose built service provision towards models which prevent repeat homelessness through highly supported, highly skilled small scale specialist congregate models that are trauma informed and designed around meeting specific needs e.g. vulnerable young people;</li> <li>- Recognise that long term intensive supported accommodation can be a settled living option for some - viewing anything that is planned on a basis of 12-month plus occupancy as settled living.</li> </ul>
SECTION 3	QUALITY, STANDARDS & REGULATION OF TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION
20	<p>Introduce a legally enforceable standards framework for temporary accommodation - The Scottish Government should take the Chartered Institute of Housing H and Shelter Scotland standards as a framework and consult the sector including local authorities, housing providers, third sector partners and those who have experience of temporary</p>

	accommodation to produce a set of agreed standards covering all types of temporary accommodation.
21	Extend the 7-day restriction on unsuitable temporary accommodation to all homeless people - Currently, there is a legal limit of seven days for families and pregnant women, but no limit at all for any other groups. A change in the law would require councils to move people into permanent accommodation quickly - or at the very least into more suitable accommodation that, whilst still temporary, provides a suitable environment for supporting the ending someone's homelessness as quickly as possible.
22	Introduce the means to enforce and monitor temporary accommodation standards - Once introduced, it is critical that adherence to these new standards is comprehensive. The Scottish Housing Regulator should have responsibility for monitoring compliance. This should be through thematic enquiry and risk based intervention as with other statutory housing duties. It will also need to be considered how Scottish Government homelessness statistics data collection could be amended to reflect new/enhanced obligations. Nationally collected statistics would be an additional tool for monitoring compliance.
<b>SECTION 4</b>	<b>THE FINANCING OF TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION</b>
23	The costs of homelessness and temporary accommodation should be a citizen-funded service, supported by Local Authority General Fund finance, and by Scottish Government Grant Aided Expenditure.
24	The Scottish Government and COSLA should present a strong case to the UK Government for temporary accommodation funding support through housing benefit to be devolved to Scotland.
25	In order to tackle poverty and give people an opportunity to access employment, training or further education and to move onto more settled accommodation, support for homelessness services should be given via a flexible grant system.
26	Rents should be set at a level similar to the Local Housing Allowance rate in order to provide a more equitable system and provide a clearer path for people to move on from TA.
27	Local Authorities will need financial support to bridge the funding gap created by moving to a LHA equivalent rent while at the same time ensuring that the standards of temporary accommodation and support are maintained. The Scottish Government should address this as part of the transformation of the use of temporary accommodation in Scotland.
28	That the devolved housing benefit funding for temporary accommodation should be ring-fenced to ensure that spending is not repurposed and focusses on preventing homelessness.

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